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PEASANT ART IN RUSSIA

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PREFATORY NOTE

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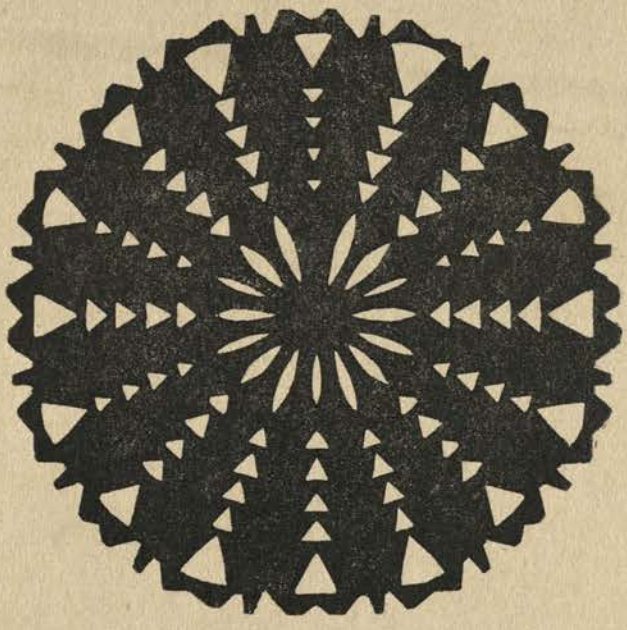


CUT PAPER DESIGN

GREAT RUSSIA

1 PEASANT COSTUME FROM ARCHANGEL

THE PEASANT ART OF GREAT RUSSIA. By Princess Alexandre Sidamon-Eristoff and Mlle. N. de Chabelskoy.

RUSSIA is an immense territory, parts of it unknown even in our own day, embracing every kind of climate and many latitudes. The country is inhabited by people of different origins, amongst whom the Slavs predominate, and whose manners and customs are of the greatest antiquity.

Situated on this vast plain are splendid cities; but, though sometimes monotonous, it has delightful scenery, immense forests and lofty mountains, rich in precious stones and all kinds of minerals. Such is the country which stretches from the Arctic Ocean to the Caspian Sea, with the Crimea and the Caucasus Mountains in the south, vast Siberia on the Asiatic boundary, and Great Russia, White Russia, and Little Russia (the Ukraine) in the centre.

Glancing back over the manners and style of living of the Russian people, one recognises that from most remote times they loved to decorate all objects among which their lives were passed; beginning with the Church, the house, vehicles, sledges, boats, clothes, even down to the smallest household bowl. In this decoration their artistic tastes—at times naïve—their religious feelings, and their deep imagination are expressed.

The long-drawn-out winter, when the peasant is obliged to cease from work in the fields, helps to develop these tastes still more. During the long evenings the family meets by the stove, each one engaged in making some object either for the house or for sale. At the time when factories did not exist, and even later when the number of them was insufficient for so large a country, the difficulty of communication, caused by the long distances and the poor roads, contributed largely to each district producing for itself most of the necessary objects. For the same reason these objects were stamped with a character and originality peculiarly local. Some few places specialised, indeed, according to the natural characteristics of the district. Thus the northern provinces, so rich in forests, produced all kinds of articles in wood, among other things plates, carved and painted. In the villages situated beside rivers or lakes, boats and all the necessary appliances for fishing were made. The Government of Riazan was noted for its pottery, its clay vessels, and its enamelled bricks, the latter being used in the decoration of churches and other buildings and for stoves. The Government of Vladimir possessed craftsmen skilled in metal-work and enamelling, as well as engravers and painters who produced popular pictures, illustrated books and

manuscripts, and fashioned icons (holy images). The Government of Tula was renowned for its arms of tempered and embossed steel, jewellery, and all kinds of articles in metal. The Government of Yaroslavl, so rich in flax, furnished many different textiles, from the simple household cloth to that of the finest quality. The Government of Archangel has always carried on a large trade in furs, and been famous for its boat-building ; also for clever workmanship in walrus ivory.

The wool of domestic animals is used everywhere to make clothing materials, as well as a kind of thick felt for winter shoes. The technical knowledge has been transmitted by one generation to another, and by the custom of the family working together. So that every peasant is not only a cultivator of the soil, but also a craftsman.

Besides the various necessary domestic articles, the Russian women excel in the making of lace, and, above all, in embroidery, which plays a great part in the life of the people. The largest number of designs and the most important characteristic motifs are found in the embroidery, and these especially help in the study of the national art. It is in a great measure due to the ingenious work of the Russian women that this art is preserved to our time.

Russian decorative art dates from very early ages. In spite of the successive influences of contact with Asia, with Byzantium, and with the West, modified by the requirements of native customs, it yet retains its national character and diversity of form, and has had the advantage at all times of exponents possessing great skill and ability. If amongst the mass of designs a certain number are found to proceed from individual inventiveness and imagination, yet the greater part have a particular or emblematic significance, which although dimmed and lost with the passage of time, yet preserves the traditional forms. Besides numerous geometrical patterns and conventional floral motifs, these designs represent sacred and decorative trees, fantastical flowers, symbolic animals such as lions, unicorns, horses, stags, birds, &c., often facing one another, and having between them a tree or a sacred vase. Many examples represent people with raised arms and outstretched hands, signifying the gesture of religious adoration, habitual to heathen as well as to Christian people ; sometimes complete compositions, such as religious processions, scenes of sacrifices, of temples, and of idols, are depicted.

Among the most general subjects are the fabulous birds called *Sirin* and *Alconost*, who assume woman's form, and who, according to the legend, live in Paradise and delight the saints with their songs.

One of the symbolic signs very much in favour was the svastika, known in the most remote period of ancient India, a sign of good augury and especially of good luck. It was freely employed in the decoration of all kinds of articles.

Later on the Czar Peter the Great, with his reforms, had a marked influence on design, and the subjects became more realistic. Attempts were made to represent whole landscapes, with palaces, festivals, and people in the costume of the time, as we see in the accompanying illustration (No. 78), which depicts a firework display at a fête.

The conditions of family life, which dedicated woman entirely to the home, not allowing her to take part in social affairs, contributed still more to interest her in handicraft. In pagan times the personality of the woman was held to be equal to that of the man. She had not only her rights in the family life, but she possessed also her social rights. She had control of her property, and she joined in the chase just as a warrior took part in battle. All was changed with the advent of Christianity. The literature and ideas of Byzantium had more effect on the women than on the men, and consequently on home life. The ascetic teachings of Byzantium, based on the complete perversity of Byzantine society, were transported with the religion into Russia, when the social life was still young and scarcely formed, and served as a base for a monastic life, as well as for the ideas of seclusion and retirement from social intercourse. Thus were created the austere conditions of the life of the *terem*, a part of the house reserved for women and exclusively for family life. This retired existence became more and more strict in proportion to the social position. Except for a few very simple pleasures, which enlivened the monotony, needlework was the favourite occupation as well as amusement. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the houses of the noblemen and the Czars, one or more rooms were always reserved near the *terem* for needlework, thus forming *ateliers* where the women in the service of the family worked under the direction of the mistress of the house.

The mass of the people came less strongly under the influence of these teachings, and, while they accepted Christianity, they still retained the advantages of pagan rule, which explains the presence in the ornamentations of the many subjects which bear traces of the earlier belief.

Among the numerous embroidered articles it is on the borders of the bedcurtains and towels especially that the most interesting and characteristic designs are to be found. The bedcurtains were used to decorate the bed and the bedstead as well as the backs of the sledges

and wedding conveyances, or on the occasions of the traditional carnival processions, and in this case the decoration was completed by towels attached to the *dougas* (bow of the shaft).

Towels, in addition to their customary use, served from the earliest times as adjuncts to religious worship, when they were employed to decorate the temples of the idols, or were hung from the sacred trees as votive offerings. We still see, as a relic of the same custom, images and crosses thus decorated, and the people bring their towels as offerings to the church. At the present time towels are used also to decorate the *izba* (peasant homes), for draping mirrors and images; or, spread out along the walls, they form a kind of simple art gallery for the Russian peasant.

Unfortunately all these practices are dying out more and more every year, in proportion to the increase in the number of factories, the products of which are causing the hand-made articles to quickly disappear, making them dearer and more difficult to obtain.

Thanks to museums and private collections, which have been established just in time, a great number of the most varied articles belonging to the household have been preserved, and they throw a light on life in past centuries and reflect the qualities peculiar to Slavo-Russian art.* However, even now there still exist in the vast districts of Great Russia many out-of-the-world spots, especially towards the north, far from the railways. In the heart of these huge forests, and away from all contact with civilisation, the life still retains its primitive and local character, and continues in accordance with the rites and traditions of the past. Here the peasant has not yet abandoned his picturesque costume, and in his typical *izba* a corresponding interior is to be found. Here, too, may still be seen the old churches of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with their many cupolas, still preserving the old images adorned with silk and gold work, or painted by a master hand, and covered with splendid chasubles embellished with precious stones and real pearls. The sacristies of these churches often contain real treasures of art and archæology among the priestly vestments.

In these places the people still use in their daily life many original articles which, although of more recent execution, are made

* Many governments and towns now have museums containing antiquities of the particular district. There is the Alexander III. Museum at St. Petersburg; the Imperial Historical Museum at Moscow, to which has been added the Schoukine Museum; while the Stroganoff Arts and Industries School contains real national treasures. Moreover, there are numerous private collections, the most striking of which is that of the Princess Sidamon-Eristoff and Mlle. de Chabelskoy, from which most of the illustrations to this article have been taken.

in accordance with the old traditional forms. The Russian people are carpenters by instinct; every peasant is accordingly able to build his *izba*, which for centuries has always been constructed in the same way, occasionally of brick, but generally of large, rounded beams, thanks to the proximity of the forest. These *izbas*, with their slight roofing, have for exterior decoration carved wooden cornices; the chief beam which supports the roof often ends in the form of a rose, a horse's head, or a conventional bird. All these decorative portions are usually painted in various colours, which give a bright appearance to the cottages.

The simple furniture consists of seats, either fixed or movable, a few tables, a sideboard for the display of plates and dishes, and some chests embellished with metal-work or painting. The peasants delight to decorate the under sides of the lids of these coffers with popular engravings. A great oven in stone is built in such a way that one part forms a large flat surface on which the whole family sleep in the depth of winter. In the right-hand corner of the wall, called the *krasni ugol* (the beautiful corner), are placed one or more holy images or icons before which wax tapers or little oil lamps burn, forming a family altar. Sometimes there are a few engravings either of religious subjects or representing popular heroes, a loom for weaving, and a few household utensils. This is the usual simple appearance of the generality of the houses, with a barn or stable, and a little enclosure round. For fear of fire the houses are placed a good distance apart from each other, but are grouped in large villages with a wide road running through the centre.

Old customs are kept up in their entirety in many of the villages, and religious and civil ceremonies are still carried out according to the ancestral traditions, sometimes so full of meaning and simple poetry. The people still retain the many observances in all the important events of family life—birth, marriage, and burial—as well as the different customs incidental to Christmas, Easter, &c.

But especially are ancient ceremonies adhered to on the occasion of weddings, such as the use of the great loaf, a kind of decorated, and sometimes gilded cake, a symbol of prosperity, as well as many gifts which the maiden is obliged to offer to her *fiancé*, and to all the relatives and guests according to the degree of relationship or to their social position. Tradition exacts that all these presents should be the actual work of the bride, as a proof of her ability and industry. This is why provident young girls prepare their presents a long time in advance. For this purpose the young maidens in every village meet together at one another's houses in turn to work; these

little gatherings, much resorted to by the young people, end with songs, games, and dances.

The wedding presents consist chiefly of towels with wide borders, with a woven or embroidered design, and *chirinkas* (a kind of pocket-handkerchief made from a square piece of material embroidered handsomely either at the corners or all round).

The custom of giving wedding presents was very widespread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not only among the peasants, who still preserve it, but also among the noblemen and even the Czars, only in this case the *chirinkas* were more handsome, being of silk or muslin, richly embroidered in gold, and decorated with fringes and tassels. Sometimes, instead of embroidery, they were embellished with wide gold lace, interwoven with real pearls. The *chirinka* was both an object for display and one of the indispensable adjuncts of the Russian woman's wardrobe, the most obvious and the favourite article; and it was, moreover, the custom always to hold it in the hand when going to church, or on visits, or during all ceremonies.

The national costume varied greatly in different governments, nearly every district and village having its special dress. The women particularly displayed their clothes, and whether they were handsomely decorated or made in the simplest manner they were always covered with a profusion of embroidery. The indoor dress consisted chiefly of the *paneva*, a skirt of thick check woollen material, and the *sarafan*, a kind of skirt with or without a bodice, pleated or gathered and buttoned in front, but always sleeveless. That is why in their lingerie the women included short bodices with sleeves of a different colour to the sarafan, very much decorated, and forming one of the principal articles of the wardrobe. The peasants generally made these in white linen with an embroidered neckband, as well as with wide embroidered trimmings on the shoulders, or in linen printed by hand. When means allowed, the sleeves were made of silk, brocade, or velvet, and were sometimes covered with heavy gold embroidery. Different in shape, these sleeves were of very fine material, sometimes four or five metres long, and were then worn gathered up on the arm. The women often wore wide aprons, with or without sleeves, and generally of linen, sometimes entirely covered with embroidery.

But it was on the head-dress—the *kokochniks*, the *kikas*, the *povoiniks*, the crowns and the diadems—that most thought was bestowed, and this was distinguished by the greatest abundance of embroidered designs. These head-dresses were extravagant, even amongst the peasants, and were made in cloth-of-gold, in damask, in velvet embroidered with gold, and sometimes ornamented with real

pearls and precious stones. Those of the young girls, in the form of a crown or a diadem, were worn so as to show the hair. This was considered as a beauty and a right belonging exclusively to the maidens, whilst married women were obliged to hide their hair under the head-dress. A married woman who wore her hair uncovered was considered to be lacking in modesty. Native pearls were generally much sought after in Russia, both Eastern and fresh-water pearls being found in the great rivers and lakes in the North. Mother-of-pearl, either carved or rounded, was also popular, and in some villages pearls were used with coloured glass.

For out-of-door garments the women wore fur capes in the winter, and in the summer short coats, or capes without fur, made of plain cloth, damask, or cloth-of-gold. Over the head-dress were worn long and wide veils (*fatas*) of white muslin, interwoven with silk floral designs or embroidered in gold, which fell partly over the face. Sometimes they were made in heavy silken material, embroidered in gold and ornamented with lace and gold fringe. In some villages they were made of linen, embroidered at the edges, just like the towels, but distinguished from them by the embroidery on the forehead.

Amongst the wearing apparel of daily use, mention should again be made of the little coats, embroidered in gold or made in rich materials, the head-shawls, often embroidered, and the slippers and gloves, as well as the waistbands woven in silk or embroidered with gold. In many districts waistbelts, woven by hand in wool of varied colours, were worn, in the fringes of which were fastened chicken bones. Young girls put these belts under their pillows, and at the first cock-crow the bone began, they declared, to twitter like swallows, thus warning the sleepers that it was time to begin work.

Small articles of dress, such as chains of filigree work with crosses, which were worn as an ornament round the neck, all kinds of collars, rings, earrings, in gold or silver, or sometimes made of real pearls threaded on hair and arranged in different ways by the women themselves, all these things were quaint and much prized.

The men's costumes, duller and more uniform, consisted, among the peasants, of caftans of different kinds and of quiet colours, and of capes of fur or of sheepskins, made in such a way that the fur was on the inside and the skin on the outside. In the house they wore trousers of linen, printed by hand, or of homespun cloth; shirts, either coloured or of white linen, embroidered at the edge as well as on the collar and sleeves; tall felt hats or round fur bonnets and caps. For footgear, in addition to boots of leather and felt, the usual article was the lapot, a kind of shoe made from the inner bark

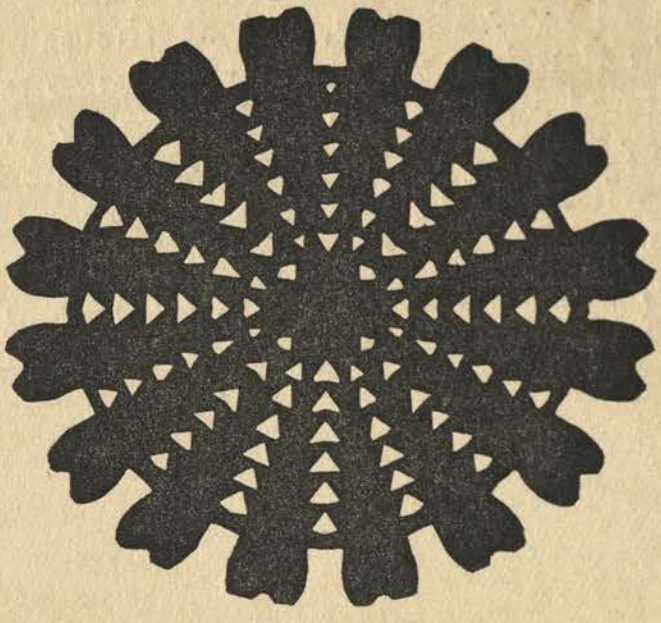
of the birch and lime trees, cut into thongs, and which each man cut for himself. This kind of bast-work was used to make a large variety of baskets, salt-cellars and other small articles, as well as large pans in which to keep flour and bread. Milk-pans and earthenware vessels were covered with strips of bark, and by placing these strips very close together the vessels were made almost unbreakable.

Amongst the materials made in the homes must be mentioned figured and dyed cloths, as well as the "naboika" cloth, hand-printed by means of small wood-blocks with designs cut in relief, which were coated over with vegetable colours, very fast and blending harmoniously (Nos. 94 and 95). The cloths are of great interest owing to the designs being very old, for the "naboika" was known in Russia as early as the twelfth century. It was used not only for clothes, but also for religious garments, flags, pavilion curtains, table-covers, and even for bookbindings. The first to use it were probably the painters of the icons, as being the most expert in the mixing of colours and in ornamentation; but later on it was employed by craftsmen who went from village to village. The designs on these cloths, in addition to the subjects and decorations already mentioned, reproduced the motifs employed in the more handsome materials, in the decorations of books, and in popular engravings. But all the subjects were adapted to suit the demands of the district, giving them the special characteristics of the productions of the Russian people. It is because of the national spirit embodied in these designs carved in the wood (sometimes faced in metal) that these blocks for printing cloth are so much appreciated by archæologists, as also are the carved wooden moulds for gingerbread, which are also worthy of study.

Gingerbread was largely used in the sixteenth and seventeenth, and even the eighteenth centuries, not only as a national article of food, but also as a much appreciated gift. According to the meaning and subject of the design, it was offered at birth, wedding, and even at funeral feasts. There were also gingerbreads "of honour," which, made to order and of exceptional size, were sometimes more than a yard wide, and weighed as much as 150 lbs. They were offered as a welcome, a gift of honour, by workmen to their patrons, by the young to the old as a sign of humility and respect. Thus, on the occasion of the birth of the Czar Peter the Great, many huge gingerbreads of different designs were presented to his father, amongst them one bearing the arms of the city of Moscow; two others, each weighing 100 lbs., with enormous double-headed eagles; one in the form of a badge,

weighing 125 lbs.; and others in the shape of a duck, a parrot, or a dove; and great decorative gingerbreads representing the Kremlin, with its turrets, surrounded by horse-soldiers, and so forth. Altogether there were offered to him on this occasion more than one-hundred-and-twenty gingerbreads and other sweet dishes. This same custom was also very widespread among the nobles and among the peasants.

All the illustrations which accompany this article are well worthy of more serious study than the space available here allows, but we have endeavoured to give a general idea of the national art of Russia and the character of the country. The original form and the beauty of Russian decoration have, indeed, attracted attention and interest all over Europe, and at the same time there has become manifest in Russia a very strong desire to revive the national art, so long abandoned and kept in subjection by Western imitation. The last fifteen or twenty years have seen a new activity spring up, the object of which is to revive the old rural industries in the villages where the peasants still preserve the ideas and methods of the old craftsmen, and there is growing up from this movement a new branch of industry which is becoming more important year by year.



CUT PAPER DESIGN

2 AND 3 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM ARCHANGEL

4 AND 5 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KALUGA

6 AND 7 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KAZAN AND KOSTROMA

8 AND 9 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KOSTROMA

10 AND 11 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KURSK

12 AND 13 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KURSK AND TAMBOFF

14 AND 15 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM MOSCOW

16 AND 17 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

18 AND 19 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

20 AND 21 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM NOVGOROD

22 PEASANT COSTUME FROM NOVGOROD

23 AND 24 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM OLONETZ

25 AND 26 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM OREL

27 AND 28 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM PENZA

29 AND 30 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM PSKOFF AND RIAZAN

31 AND 32 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM RIAZAN

33 AND 34 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM RIAZAN

35 AND 36 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM SMOLENSK AND TULA

37 AND 38 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM TULA

39 PEASANT COSTUME FROM TULA

40 AND 41 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM TVER

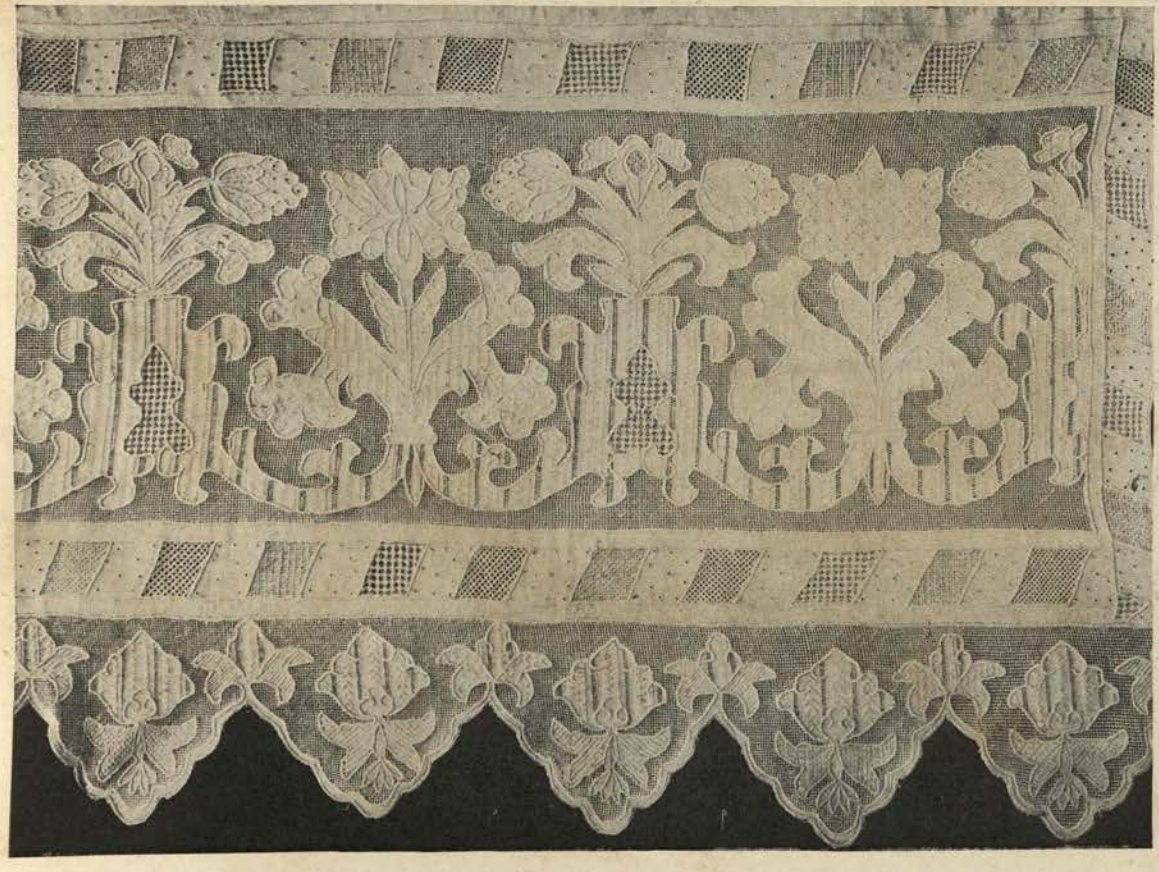
42 AND 43 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM TVER

44 PEASANT COSTUME FROM VLADIMIR

45 AND 46 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM VOLOGDA AND YAROSLAVL

47 AND 48 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM YAROSLAVL

49 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM VOLOGDA

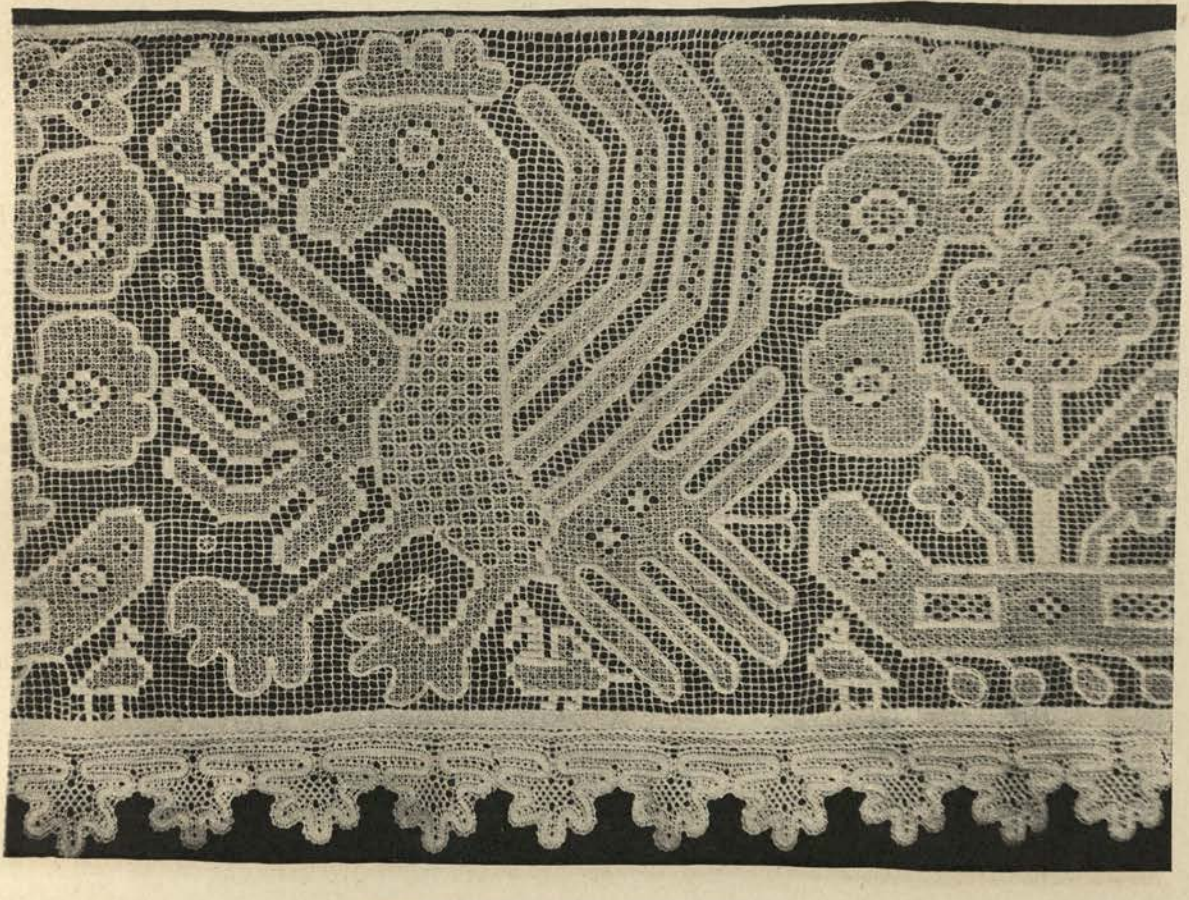


50 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM ST. PETERSBURG

51 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM ST PETERSBURG

52 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

53 LACE FOR TRIMMING OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM OREL



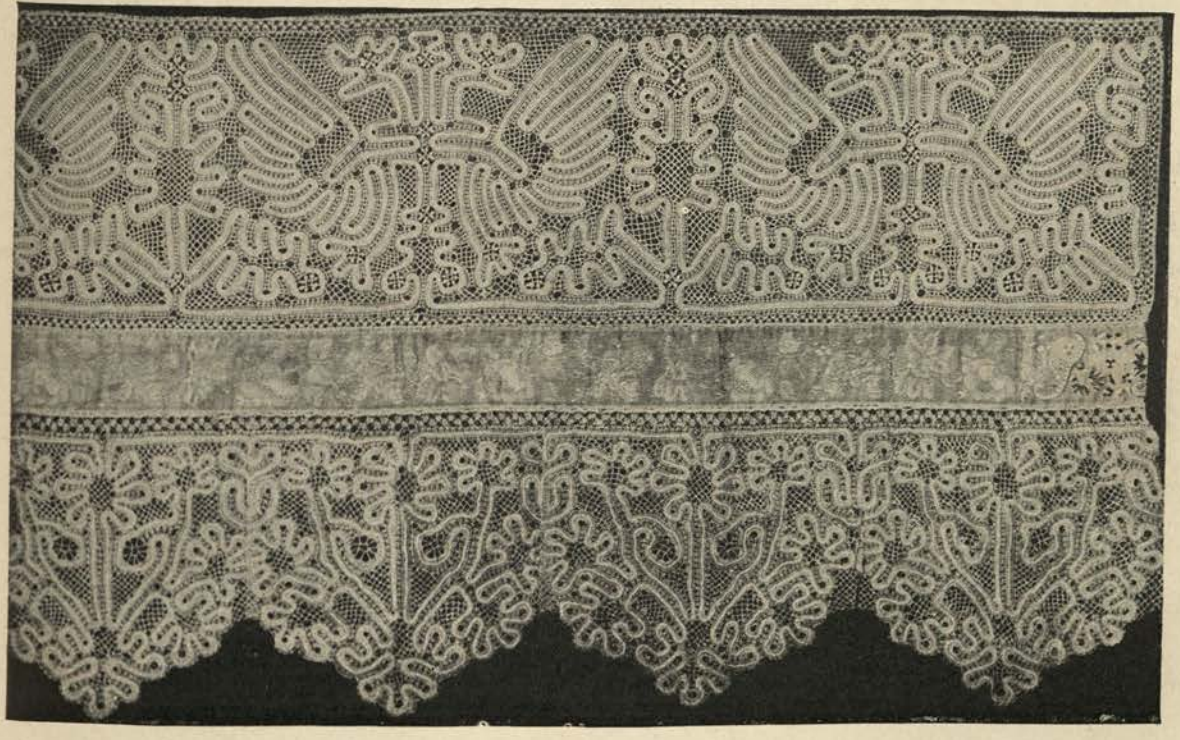
54 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

55 AND 56 BORDERS OF BEDCURTAINS, FROM MOSCOW

57 LACE BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

58 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM MOSCOW

59 DRAWN-THREAD TRIMMING OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM YAROSLAVL



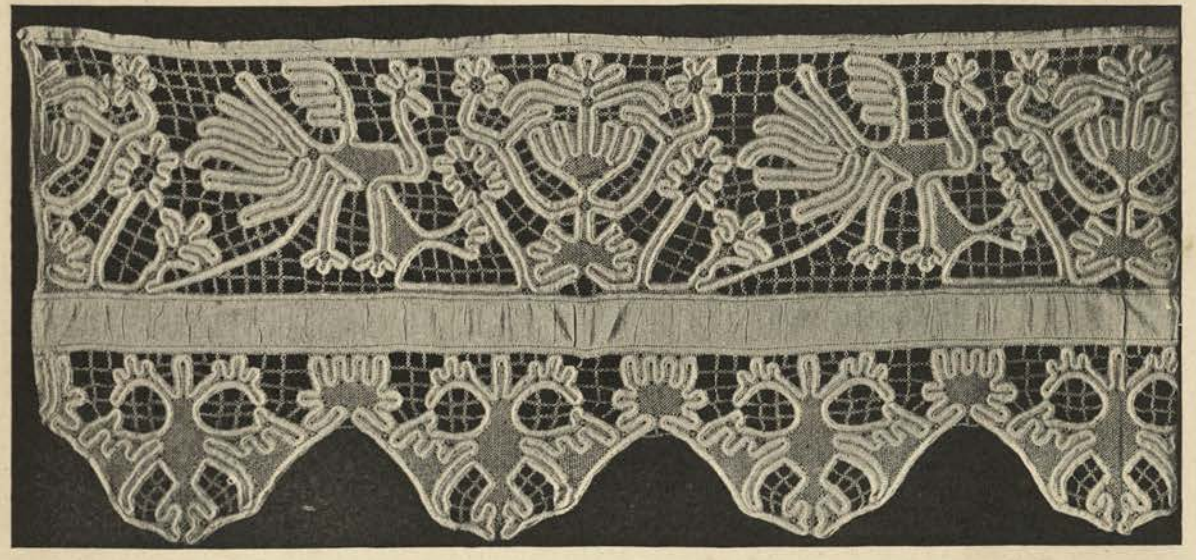
60 LACE BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

61 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM YAROSLAVL

62 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM ST. PETERSBURG

63 CURTAIN IN DRAWN-THREAD ON SILK, FROM TVER

64 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM YAROSLAVL



65 LACE BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM KOSTROMA

66 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM MOSCOW

67 BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM MOSCOW

68 DRAWN THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN IN COLOURED SILKS, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

69 EMBROIDERED SILK AND LACE BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM TVER

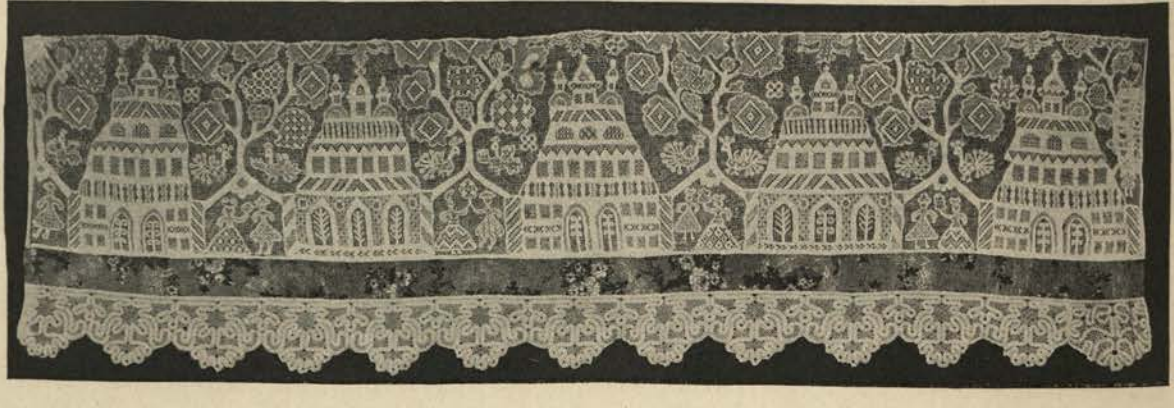
70 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM YAROSLAVL

71 DRAWN-THREAD TRIMMING OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM ST. PETERSBURG

72 DRAWN-THREAD TRIMMING OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM YAROSLAVL

73 LACE BORDER OF TOWEL, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

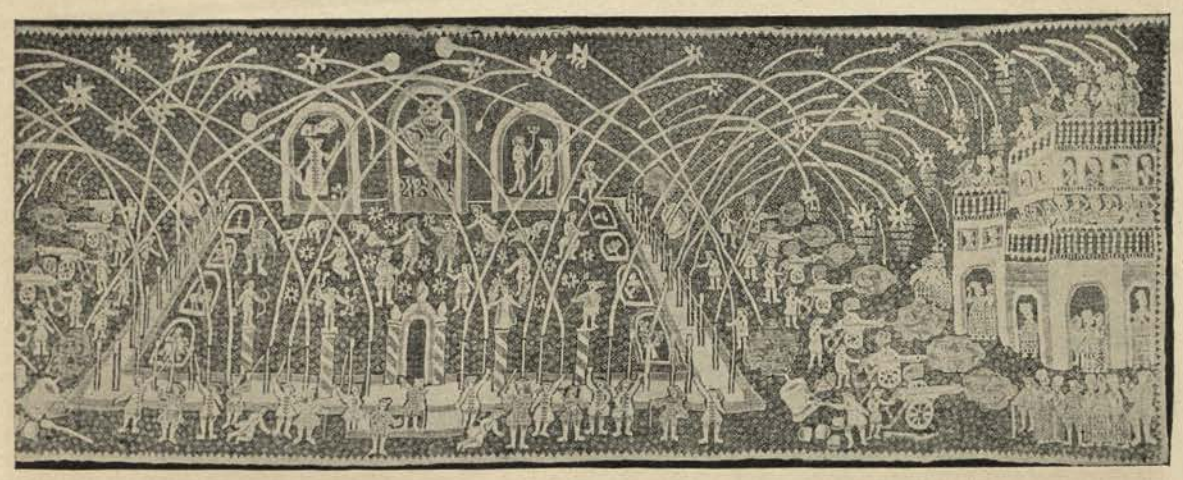
74 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD



75 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN FROM MOSCOW

76 LACE BORDER OF TOWEL, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

77 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM NIJNI-NOVGOROD

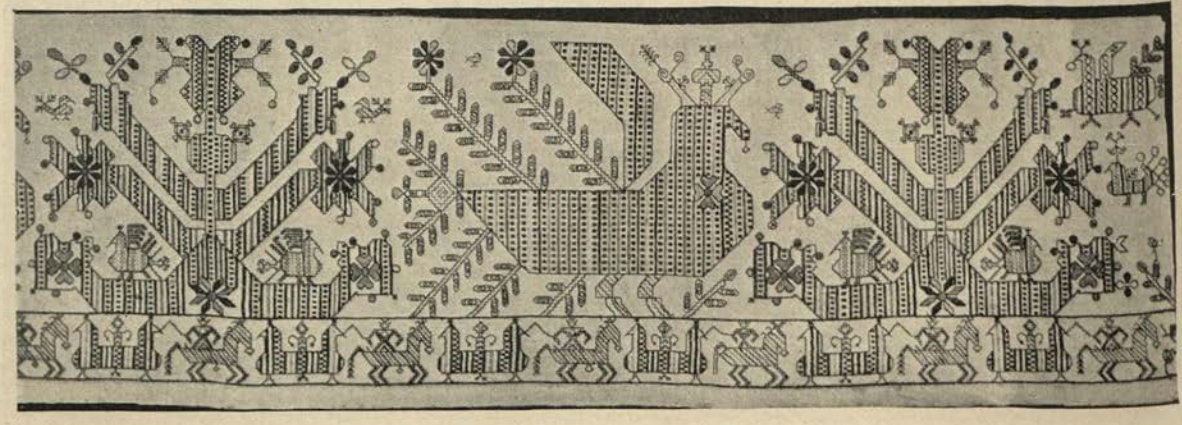


78 DRAWN-THREAD BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM ST. PETERSBURG

79 BORDER OF TOWEL EMBROIDERED ON LINEN, FROM ST. PETERSBURG

80 BORDER OF TOWEL EMBROIDERED ON LINEN, FROM KALUGA

81 TRIMMING OF BEDCURTAIN EMBROIDERED ON LINEN, FROM OLONETZ

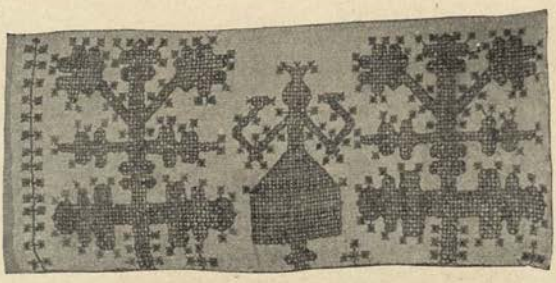


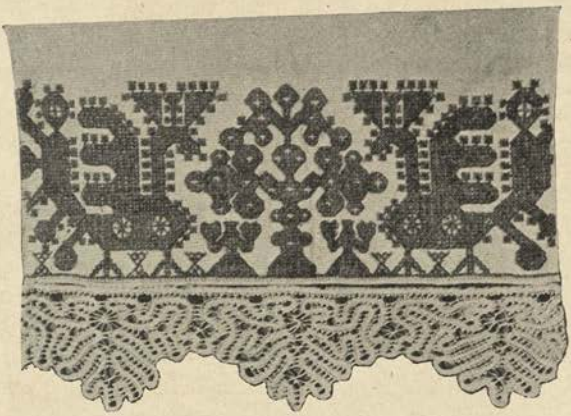
82 TRIMMING OF BEDCURTAIN EMBROIDERED ON LINEN, FROM OLONETZ

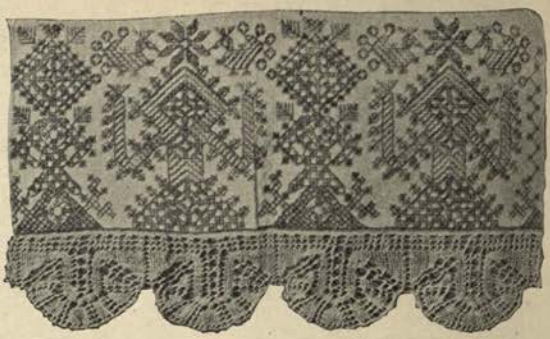
83 BORDER OF TOWEL EMBROIDERED ON LINEN, FROM KALUGA

84 EMBROIDERED BORDER OF BEDCURTAIN, FROM TVER

85 TRIMMING OF CHASUBLE EMBROIDERED ON LINEN

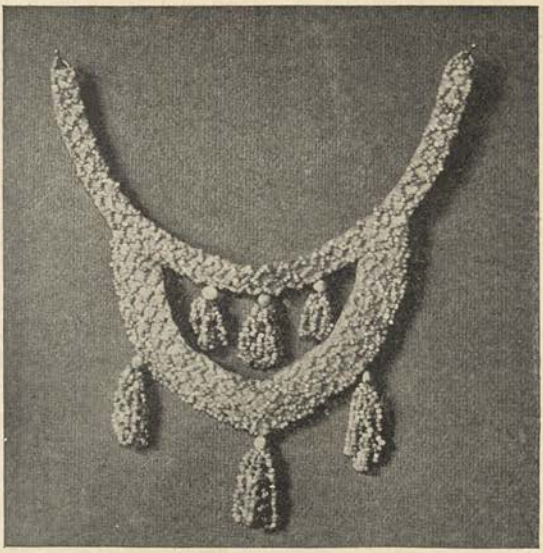


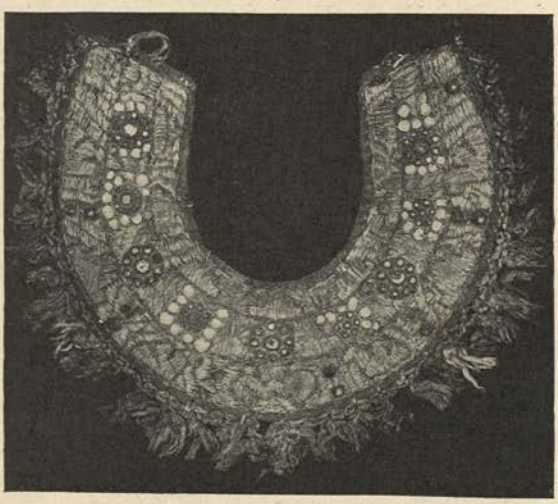


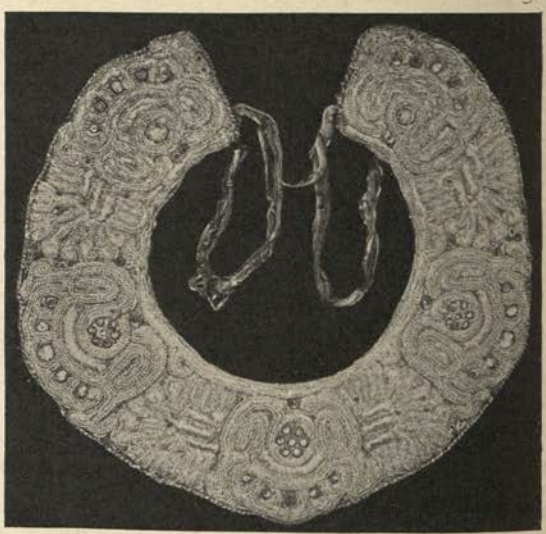


86 TO 93 BORDERS OF TOWELS EMBROIDERED ON LINEN, FROM KALUGA, NOVGOROD, AND ST. PETERSBURG

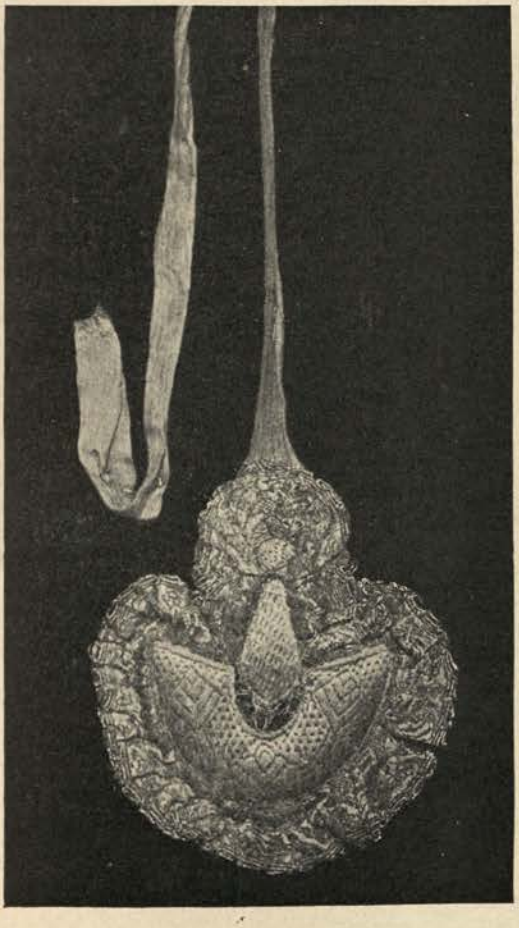
94 AND 95 LINEN HAND-PRINTED IN COLOURS FROM WOOD-BLOCKS ("NABOIKA")

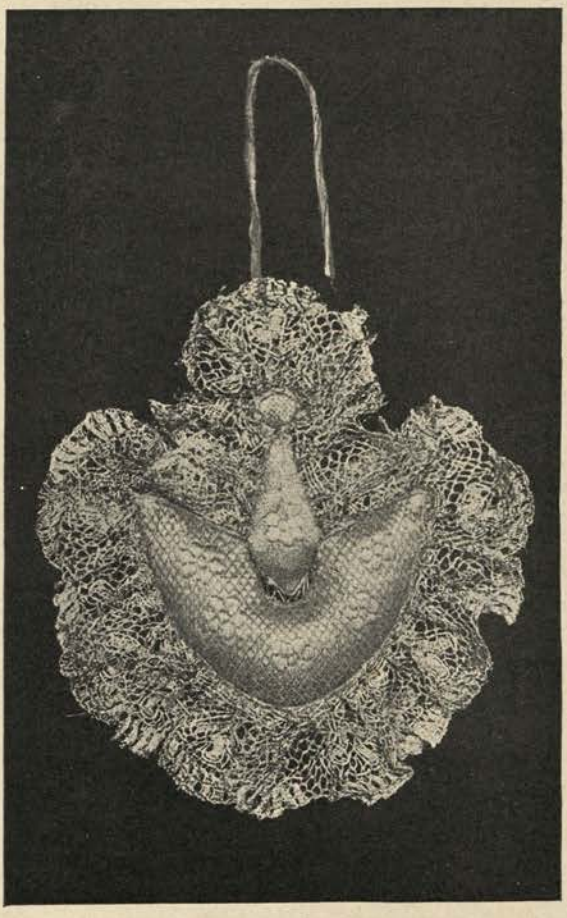




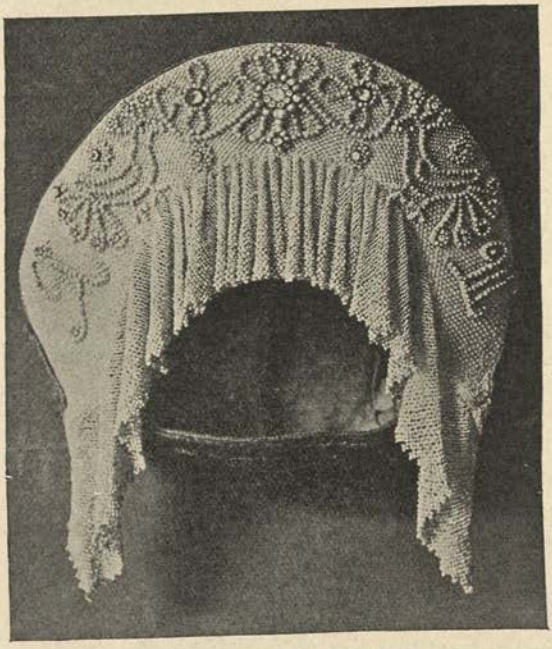


96 AND 97 COLLARS IN CUT MOTHER-OF-PEARL
98 AND 99 COLLARS IN GOLD THREAD EMBROIDERY ORNAMENTED WITH STONES AND PEARLS

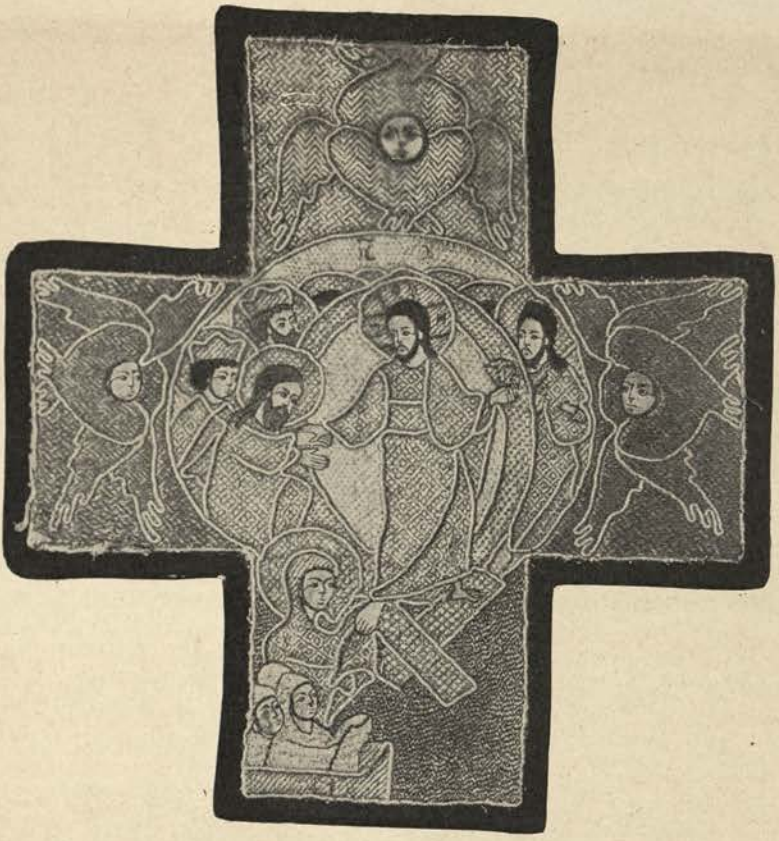




100 TO 103 HAIR ORNAMENTS ("KOSNIK")
WORN BY YOUNG GIRLS



104 TO 107 HEAD-DRESSES WORN BY WOMEN FROM VLADIMIR, MOSCOW, KALUGA, AND NOVGOROD

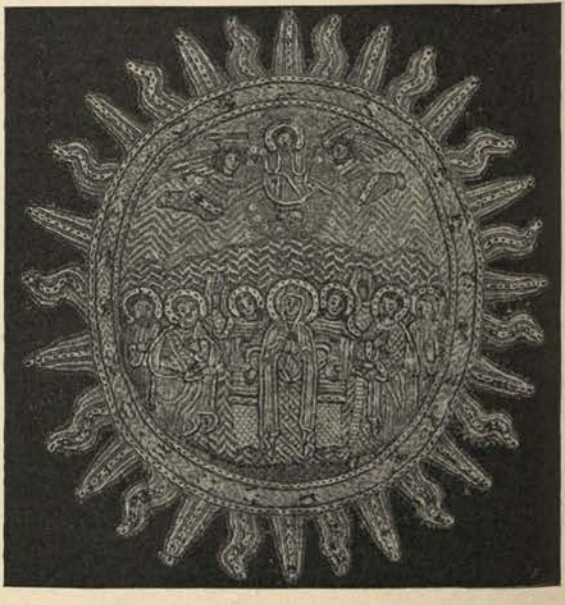


108 AND 109 CROSS EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILK AND EMBROIDERED ICON PANEL FROM NORTH RUSSIA

110 EUCHARISTIC CLOTH EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILK ON SATIN

111 EUCHARISTIC CLOTH EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILK ON SATIN

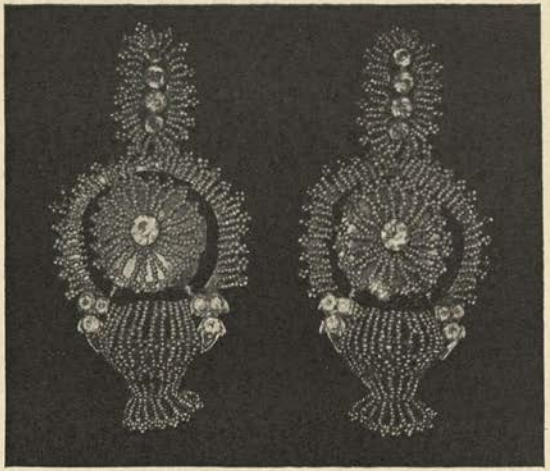
112 ICON PANEL EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILK ON SATIN



113 ORNAMENT OF CHASUBLE EMBROIDERED IN GOLD AND SILK

114 TO 116 ANCIENT DOLLS DRESSED IN THE COSTUME OF THEIR PERIODS

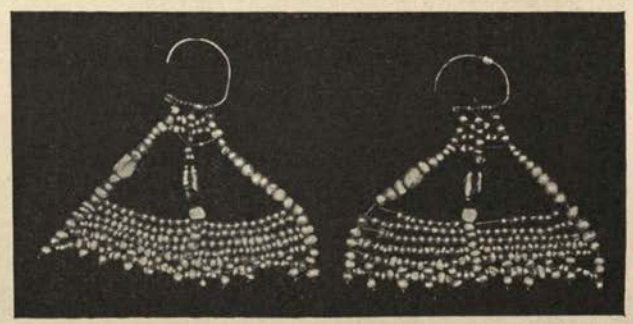
117 CHASED SILVER CROSS



118 PAIR OF PEARL EARRINGS

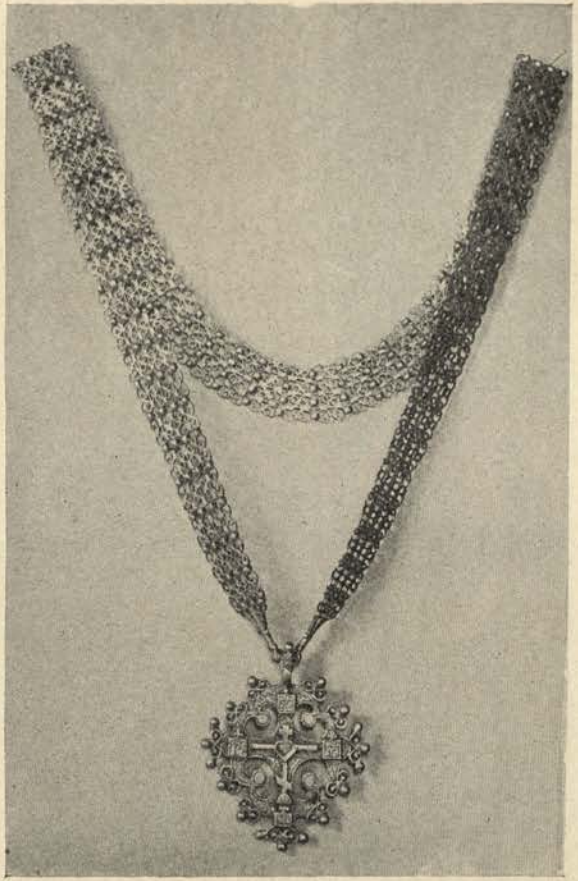
119 CHASED SILVER CROSS

120 TRIPTYCH IN COPPER AND ENAMEL



121 PAIR OF PEARL EARRINGS

122 CARVED WOODEN CROSS IN SILVER FRAME

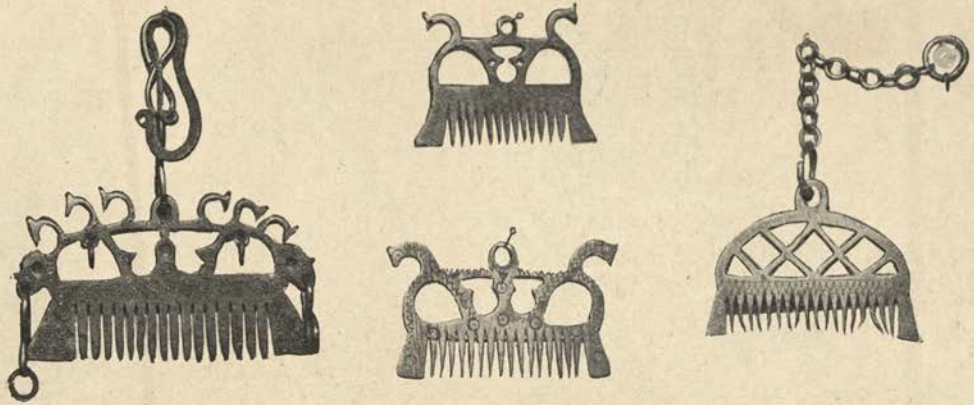


123 SILVER CHAIN AND PENDANT

124 COPPER CROSS

125 TO 130 SILVER-GILT AND ENAMELLED EARRINGS SET WITH STONES AND PEARLS

131 COPPER INKSTAND



132 TO 135 METAL COMBS CARRIED BY MEN AND ATTACHED TO THE WAISTBELT

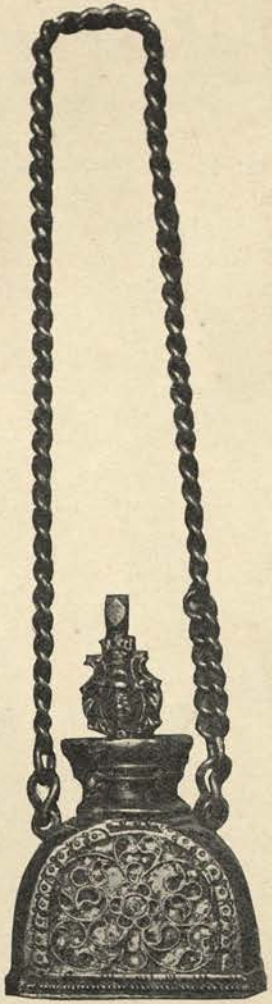
136 COPPER INKSTAND

137 SILVER BOWL

138 TO 140 COPPER CANDLESTICKS

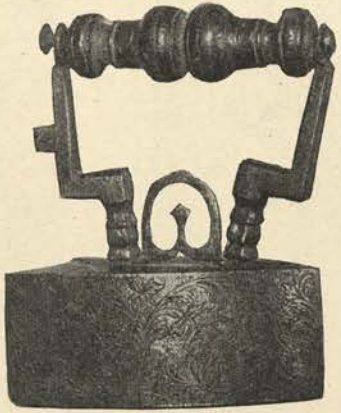
141 SILVER BOWL

142 TO 150 IRON AND COPPER PADLOCKS

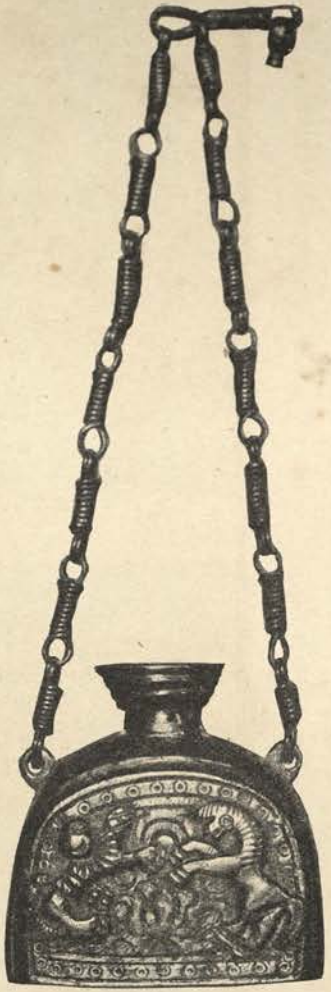


151 HANGING COPPER INK-POT

152 REPOUSSÉ COPPER JUG AND GOBLETS



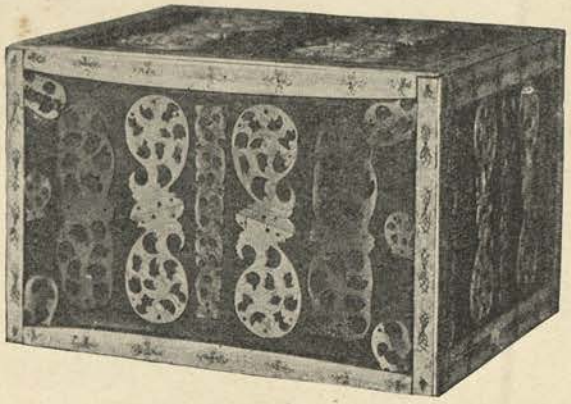
153 AND 154 COPPER SMOOTHING-IRONS



155 HANGING COPPER INK-POT

156 TO 159 EARTHENWARE TILES

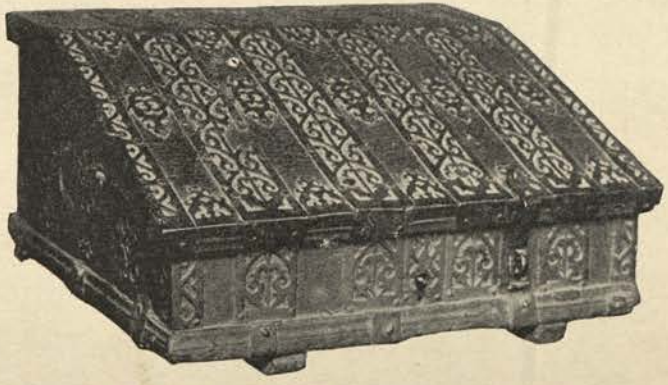
160 TO 163 EARTHENWARE COVERED DISH AND JUGS



164 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY

166 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY, FROM ARCHANGEL

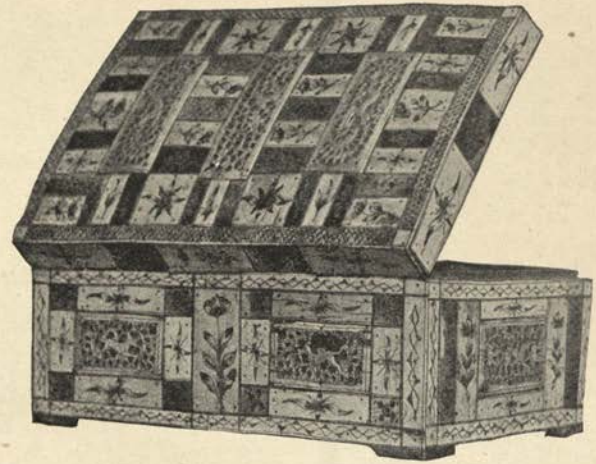
167 WOODEN CASKET WITH METAL ORNAMENTATION



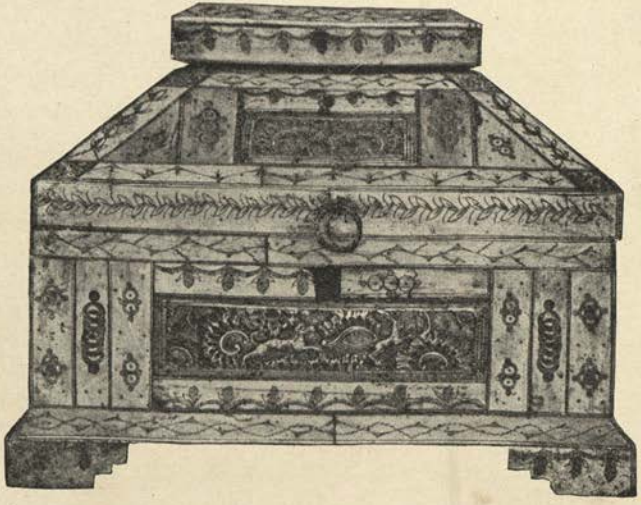
165 WOODEN BOX WITH METAL ORNAMENTATION

168 WOODEN CASKET WITH METAL ORNAMENTATION

169 CASKET IN CARVED AND PAINTED WALRUS IVORY, FROM ARCHANGEL



170 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY



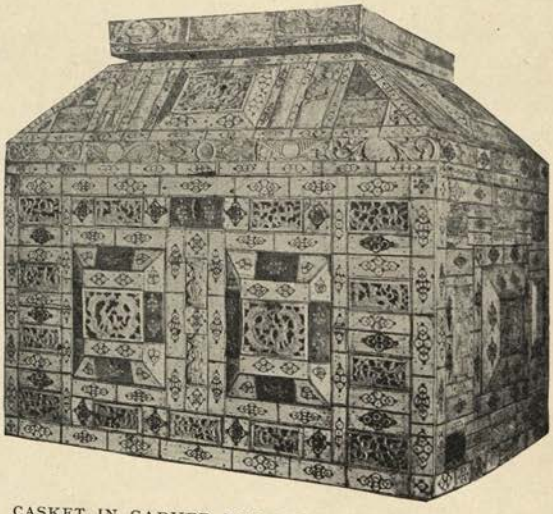
171 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY, FROM ARCHANGEL

172 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY FROM ARCHANGEL

173 IRON CASKET

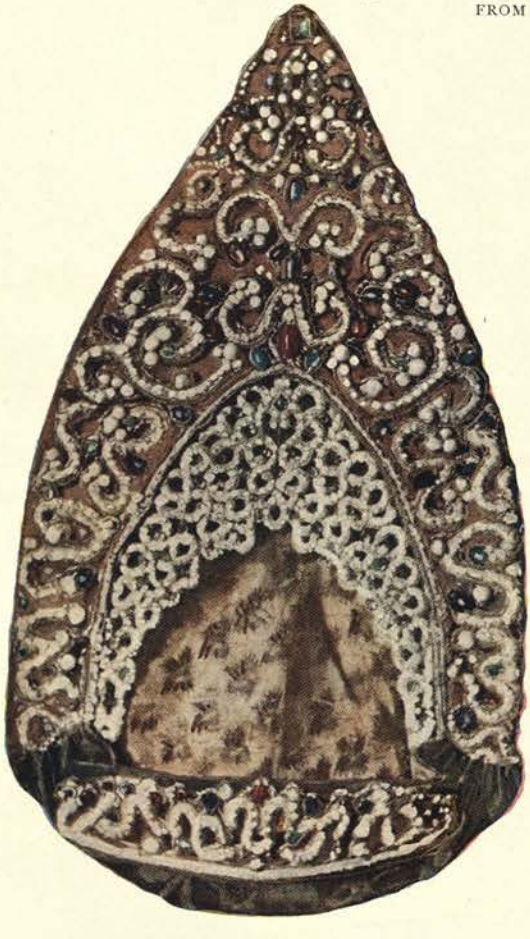
174 IRON CASKET

175 IRON CASKET



176 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY, FROM ARCHANGEL

177 CASKET IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY, FROM ARCHANGEL

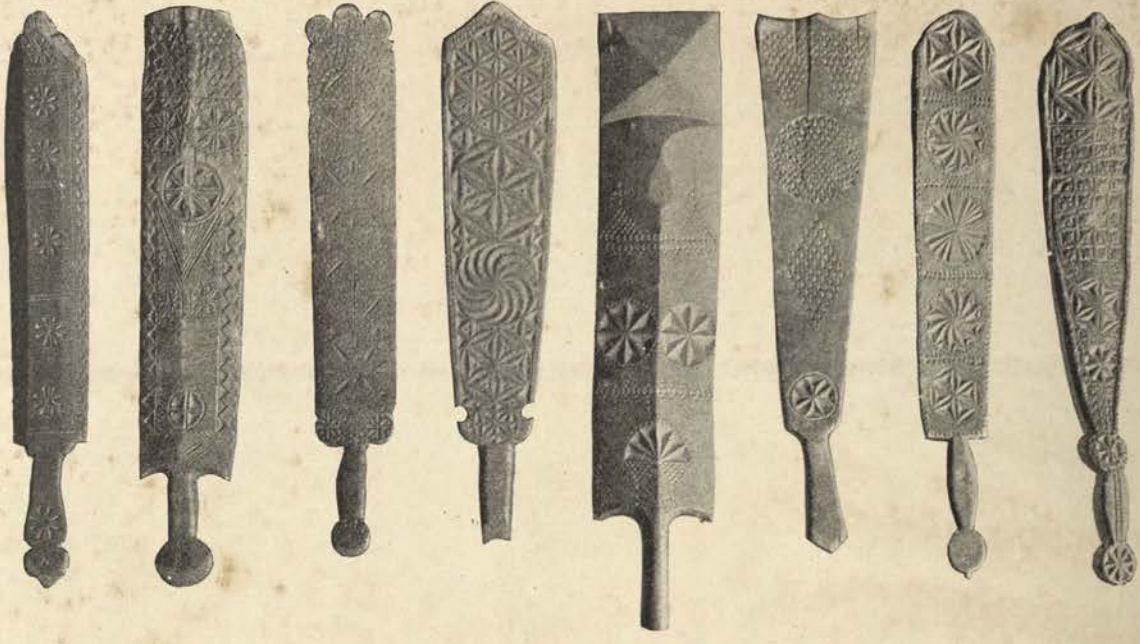


178 WOMAN'S HEAD-DRESS ORNAMENTED WITH PEARLS AND PRECIOUS STONES, FROM KOSTROMA

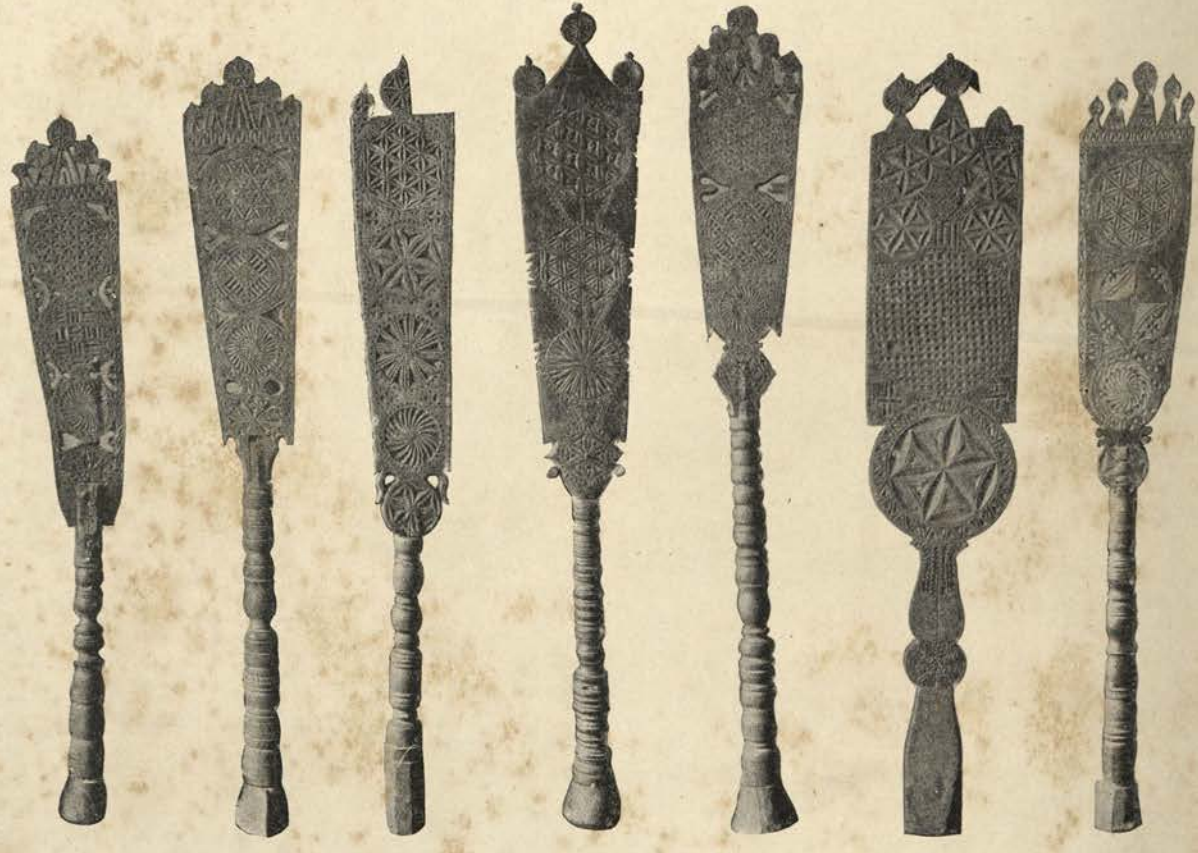
179 EMBROIDERED BAG ORNAMENTED WITH PEARLS

180 EMBROIDERED PINCUSHION

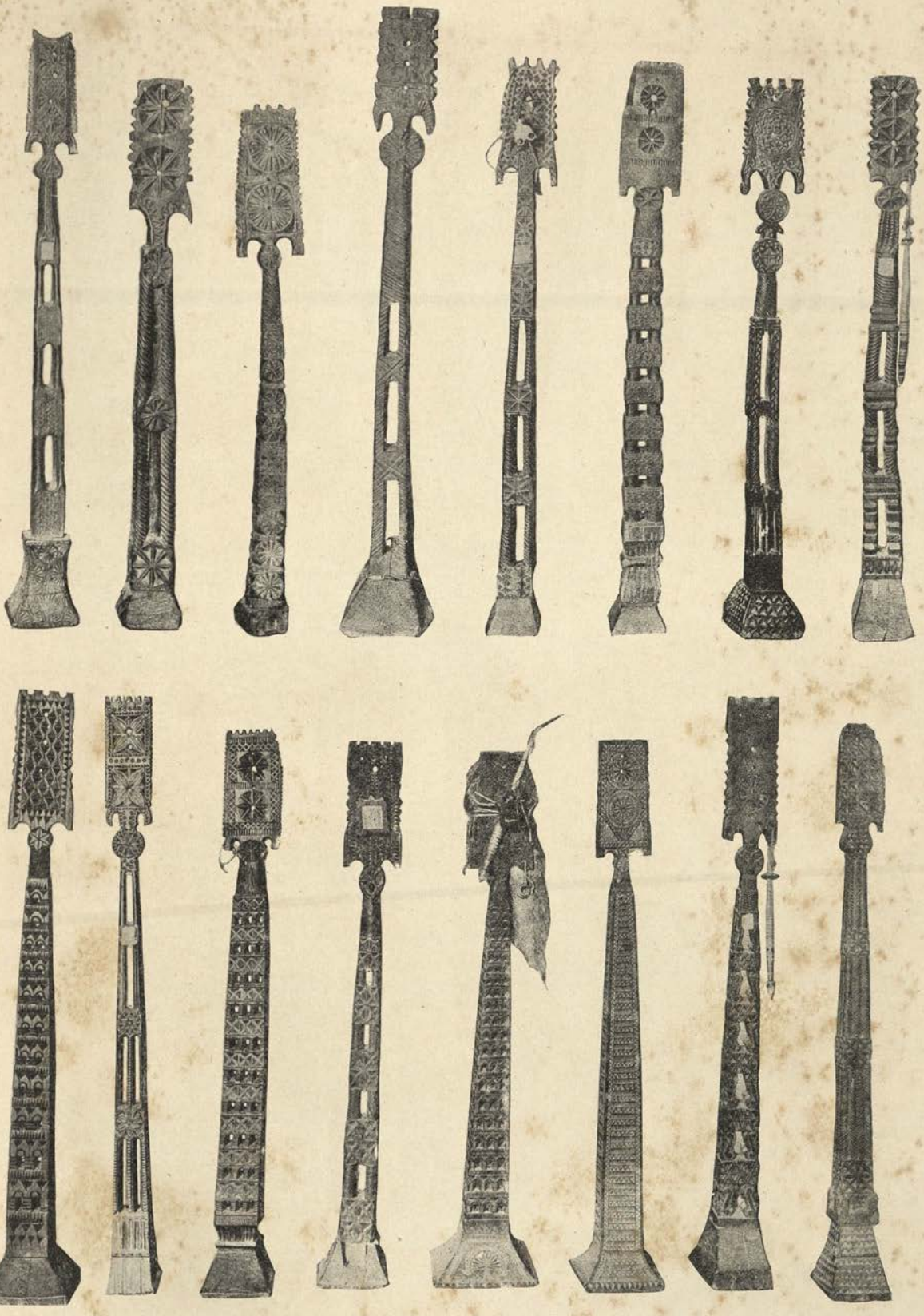
181 TO 187 CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN DISTAFFS ("PRALKI")



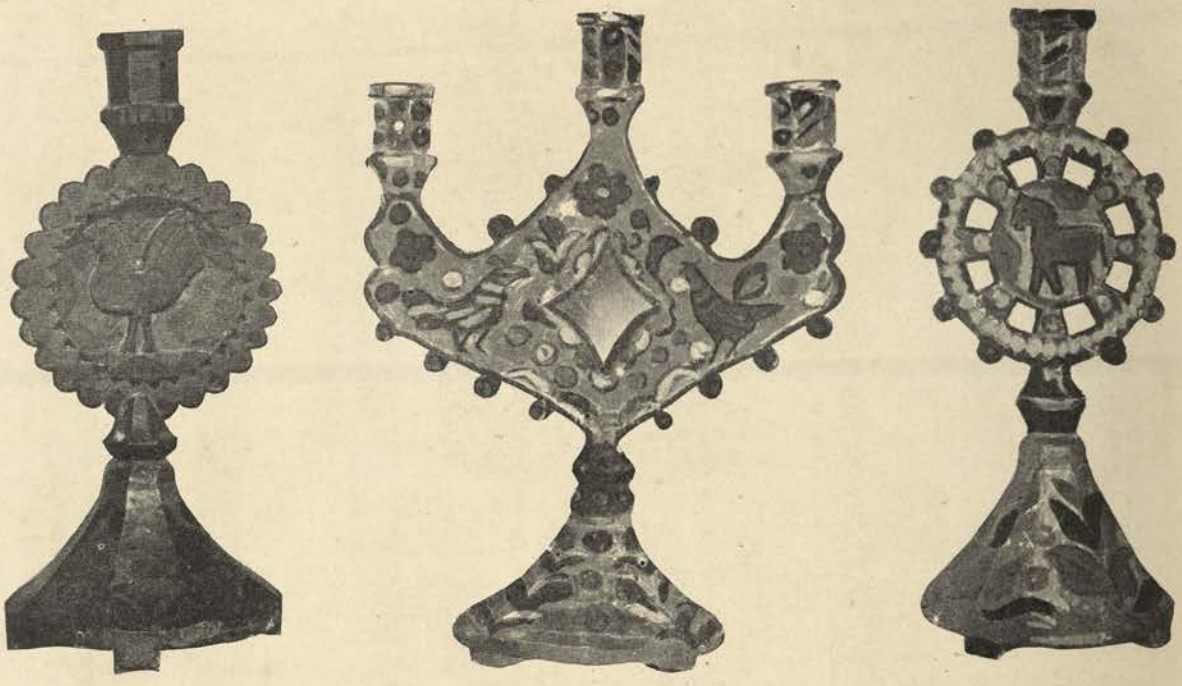
188 TO 195 CARVED WOODEN LAUNDRY BEETLES ("VALKI")



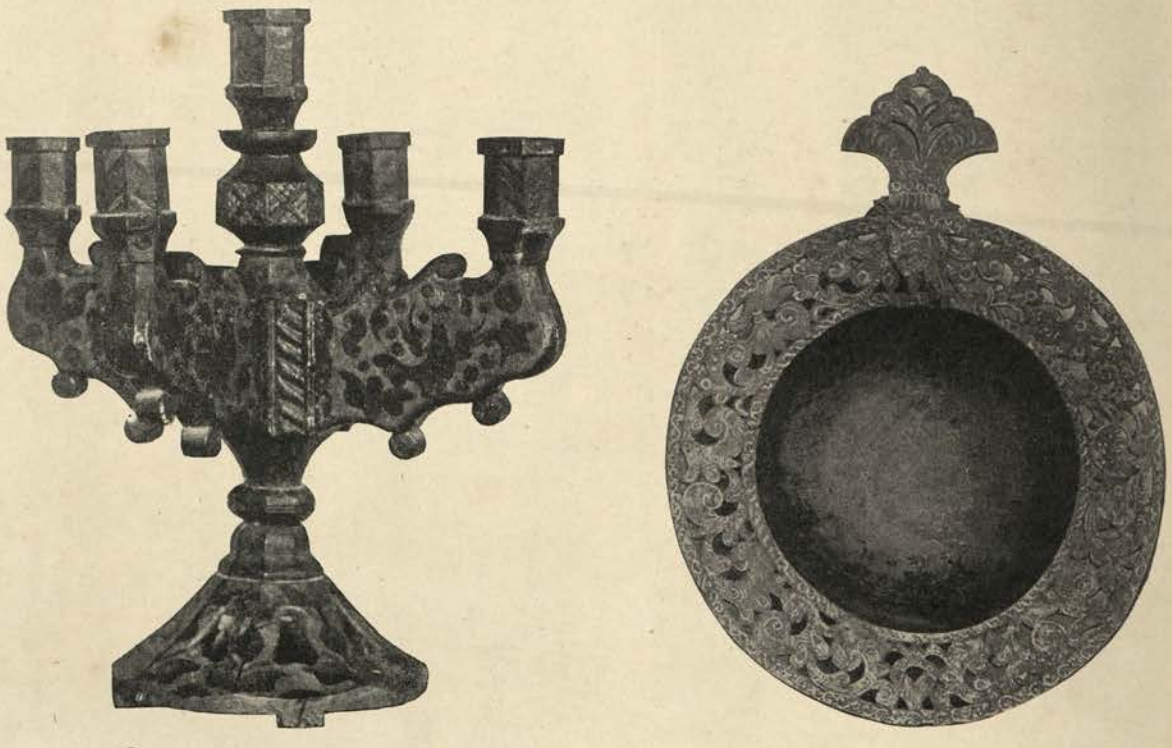
196 TO 202 CARVED WOODEN LAUNDRY BEETLES ("VALKI") AND DISTAFFS ("PRALKI")



203 TO 218 CARVED WOODEN DISTAFFS ("PRALKI")



219 TO 221 CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN CANDLESTICKS



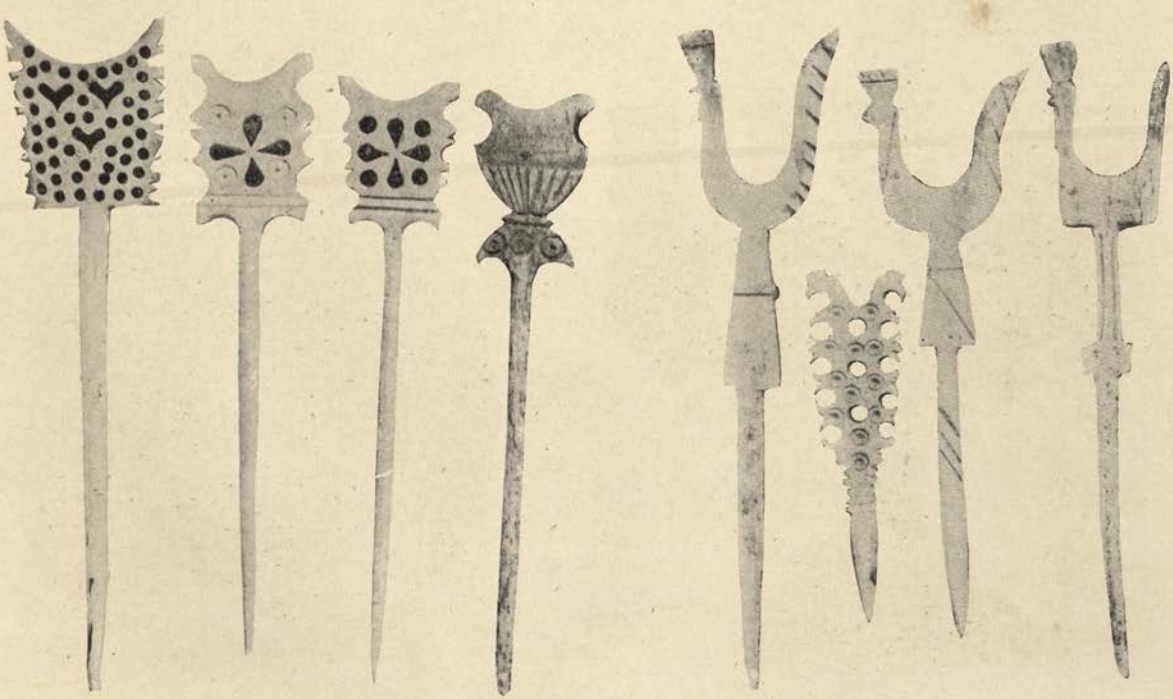
222 AND 223 CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN CANDLESTICK AND PLAQUE

224 CARVED WOODEN SPOON

225 PAINTED WOODEN SALT-BOX

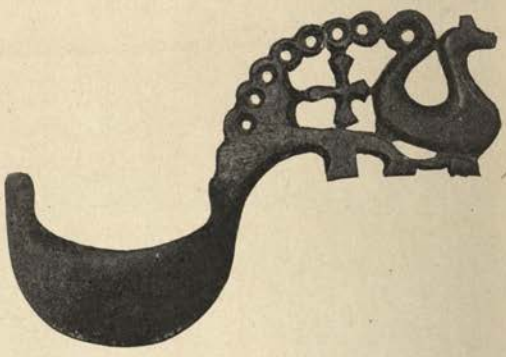
226 CARVED WOODEN SPOON

227 CARVED WOODEN SPOON



228 TO 235 READING-POINTERS IN CARVED WALRUS IVORY

236 CARVED WOODEN SCOOP



237 CARVED WOODEN SCOOP

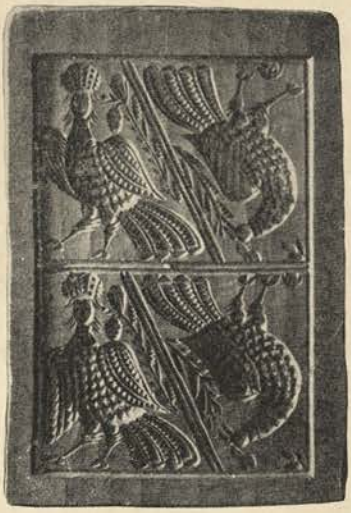
238 CARVED WOODEN SCOOP

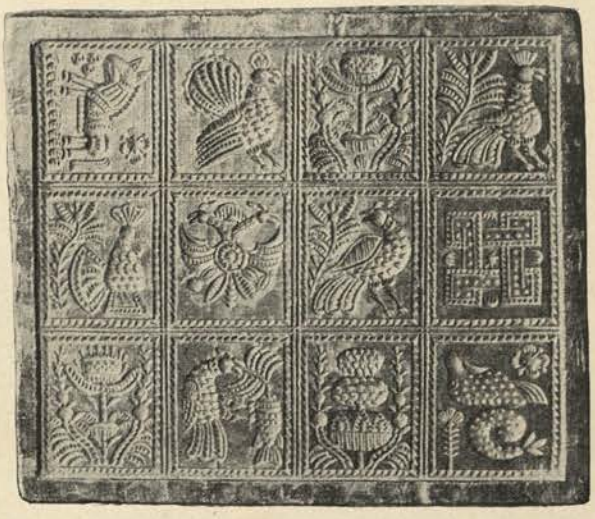
239 CARVED WOODEN EGG-DISH

240 CARVED WOODEN LAUNDRY BEETLE

241 AND 242 CARVED WOODEN SCOOPS

243 CARVED WOODEN LAUNDRY BEETLE



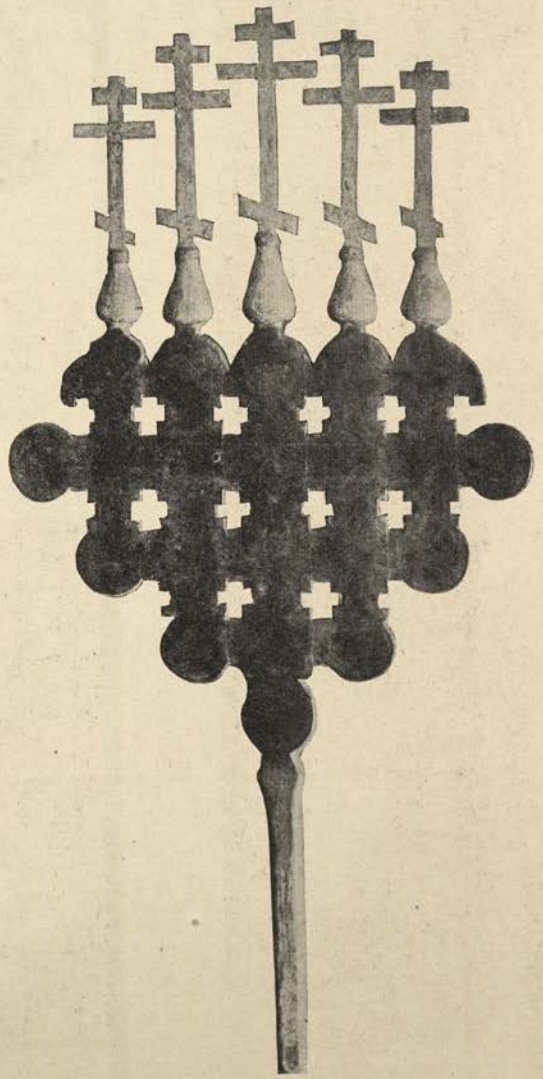


244 TO 250 CARVED WOODEN CAKE-MOULDS

251 PORTION OF A CARVED WOODEN CROSS

252 CARVED WOODEN FRAME

253 CARVED WOODEN BOWL

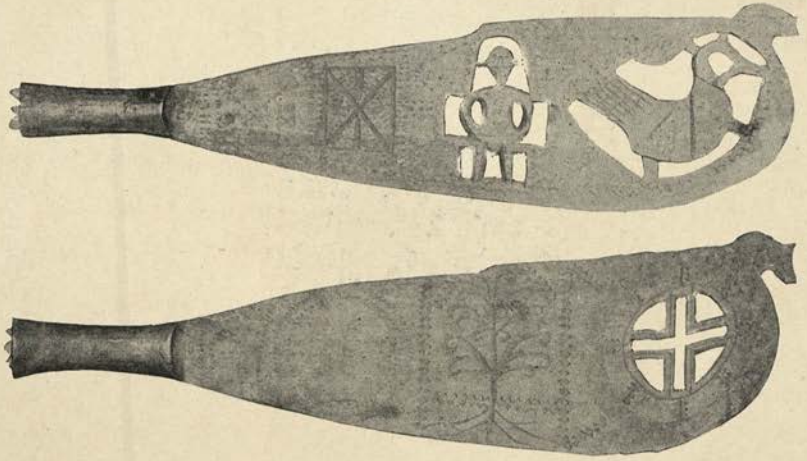


254 CARVED WOODEN CROSS

255 PORTION OF A CARVED WOODEN ALTAR CROSS

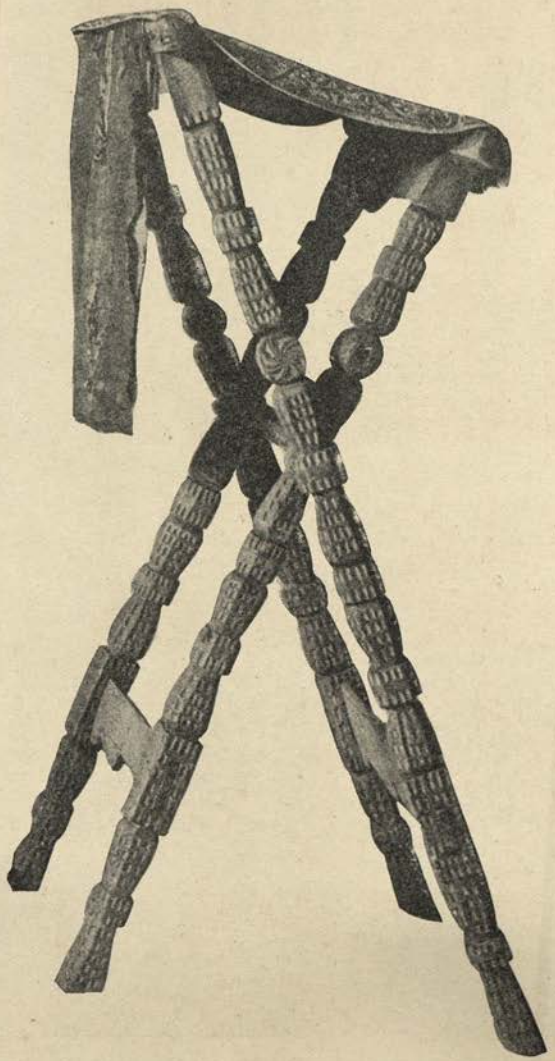
256 CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN MUG

257 CARVED WOODEN SALT-BOX

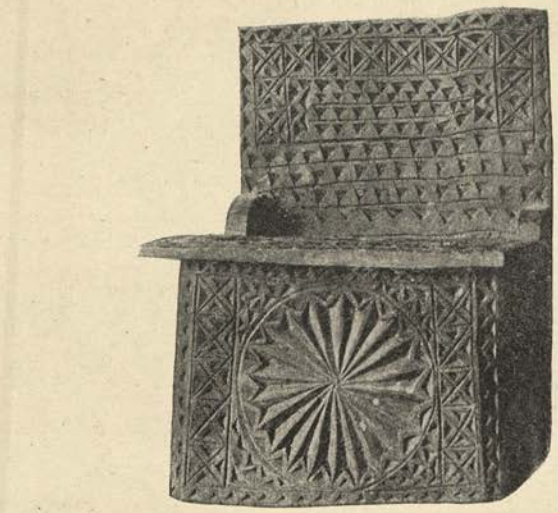


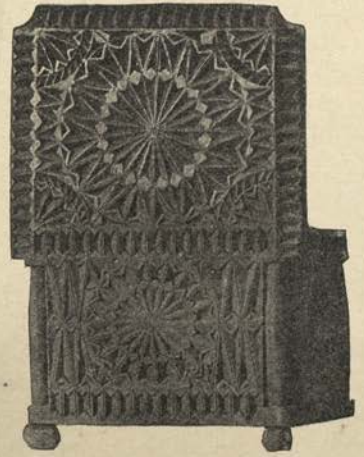
258 AND 259 CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN BRAKES

260 CARVED WOODEN PANEL

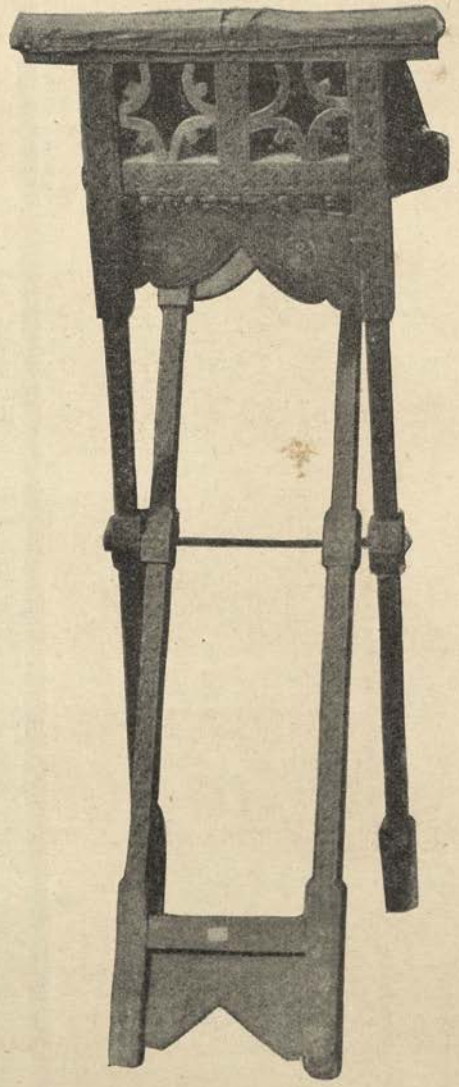


261 CARVED FOLDING READING-DESK ("ANALOI")

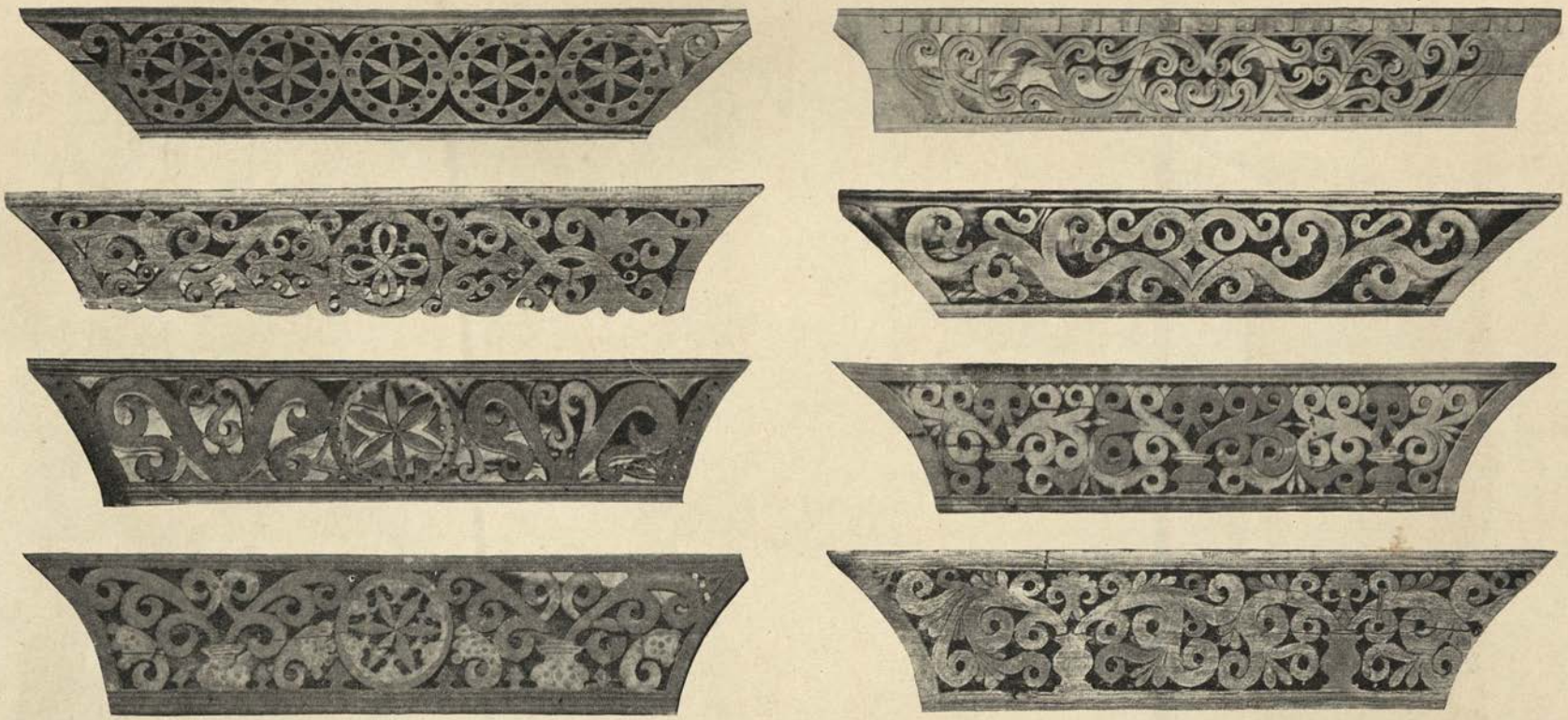




262 TO 264 CARVED WOODEN SALT-BOXES



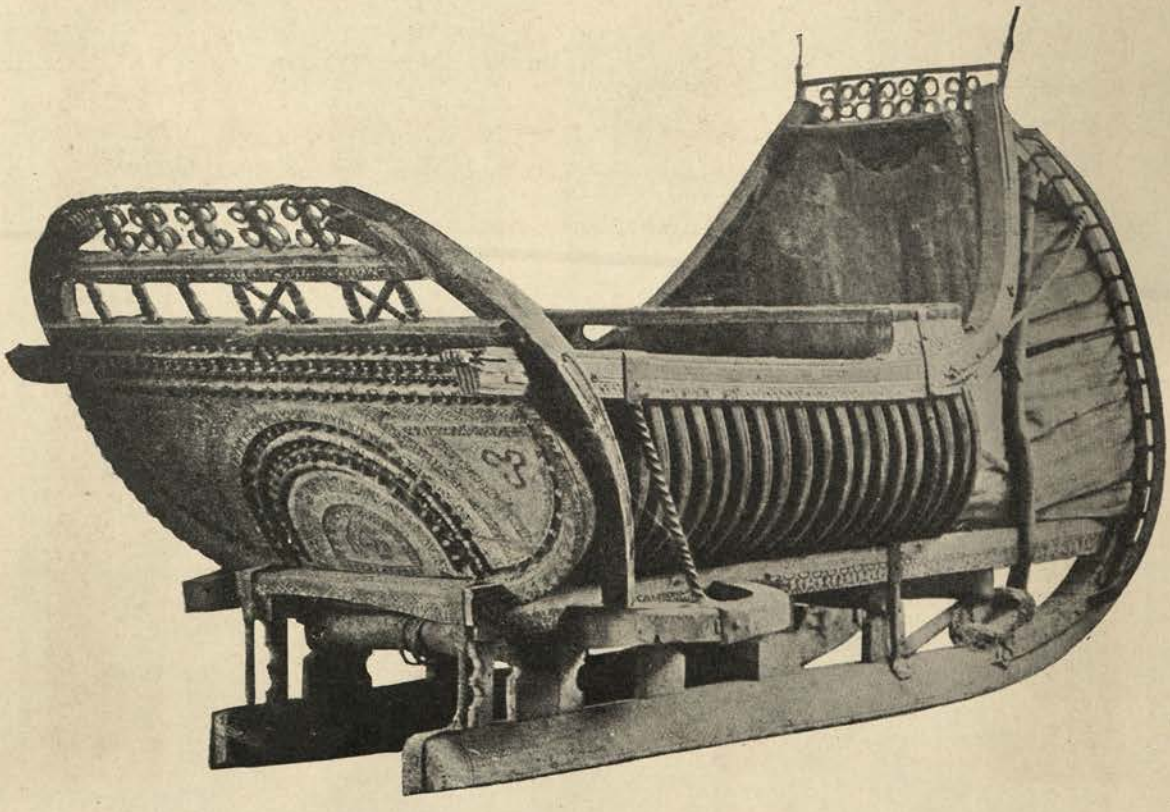
265 CARVED FOLDING READING-DESK ("ANALOI")



266 TO 273 CARVED WOODEN CORNICES ("NALITCHNIKI") PLACED ABOVE WINDOWS (SEE NO. 298)

274 AND 275 CARVED WOODEN BED-BOARDS

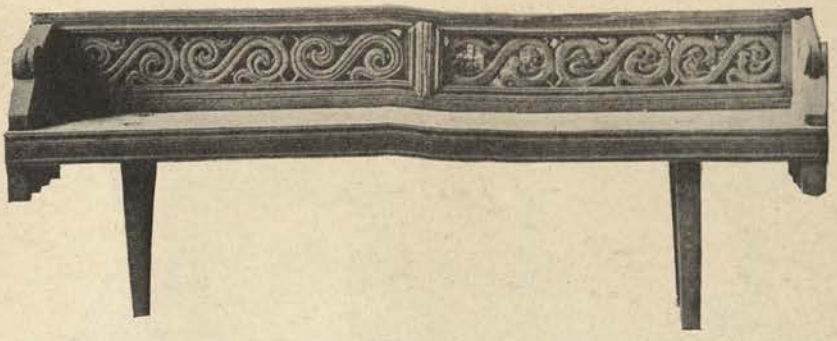
276 CARVED WOODEN SLEDGE FROM VOLOGDA



277 CARVED WOODEN SLEDGE

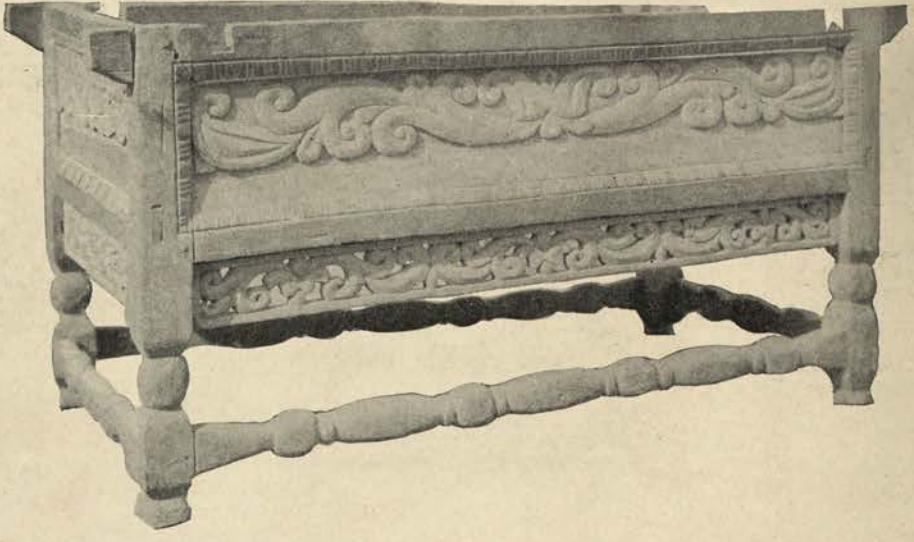
278 CARVED WOODEN SLEDGE FROM VOLOGDA

279 AND 280 CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN FRAME AND CARVED TABLE, FROM YAROSLAVL



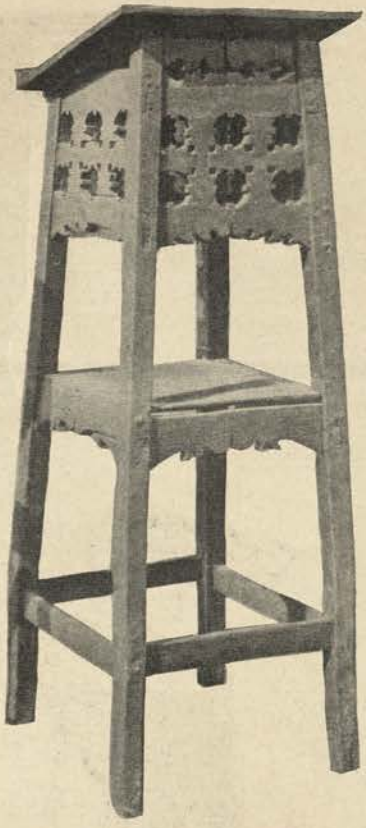
281 CARVED BENCH

282 TO 284 CARVED BENCHES

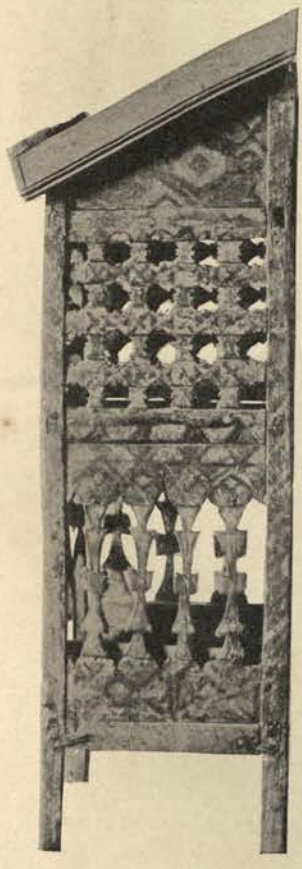


285 CARVED TABLE

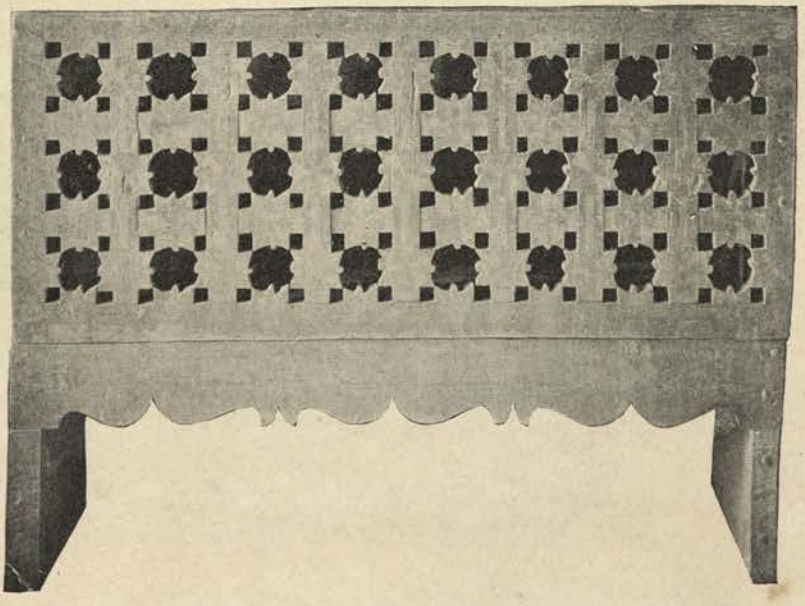
286 CARVED "CANDLE" TABLE



287 CARVED READING-DESK FROM ARCHANGEL

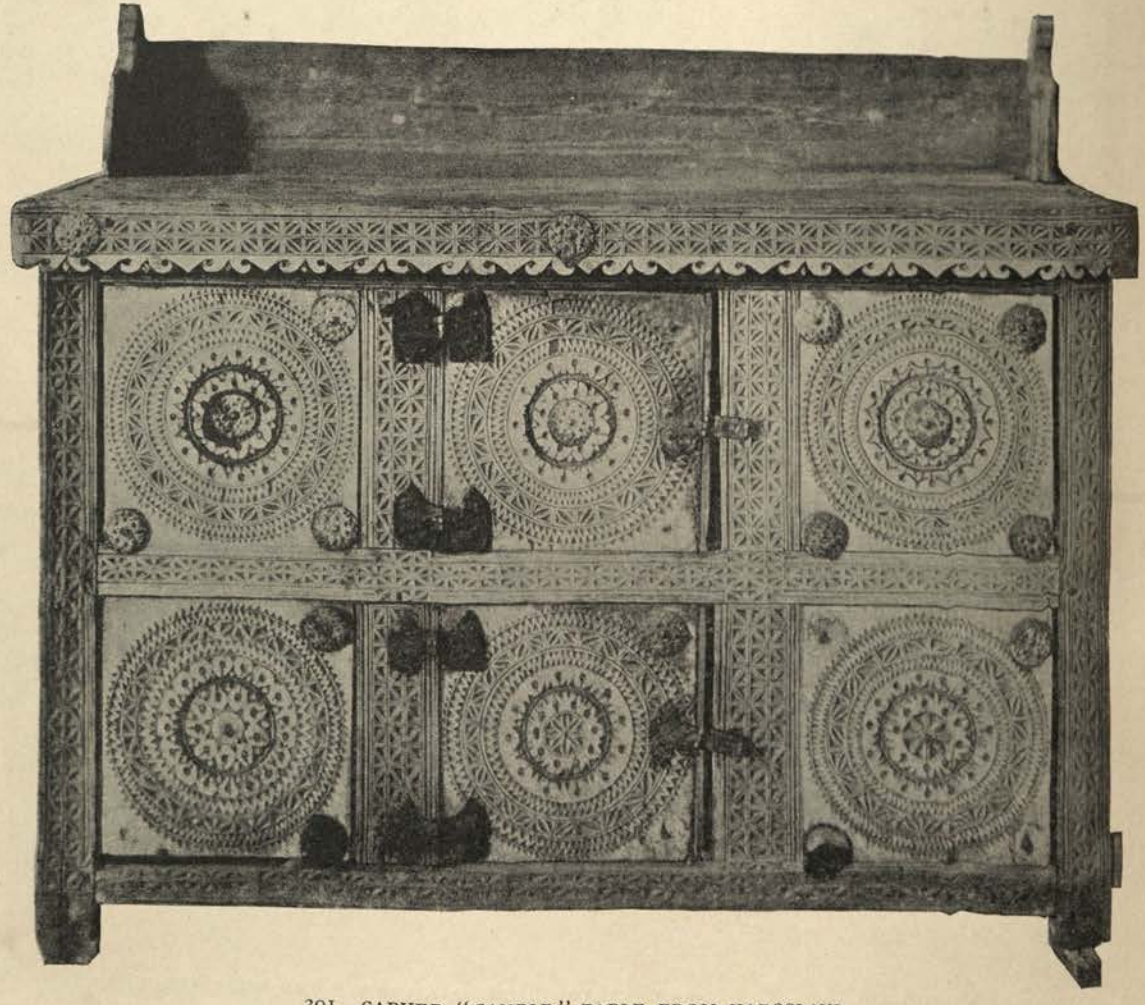


288 CARVED READING-DESK FROM YAROSLAVL

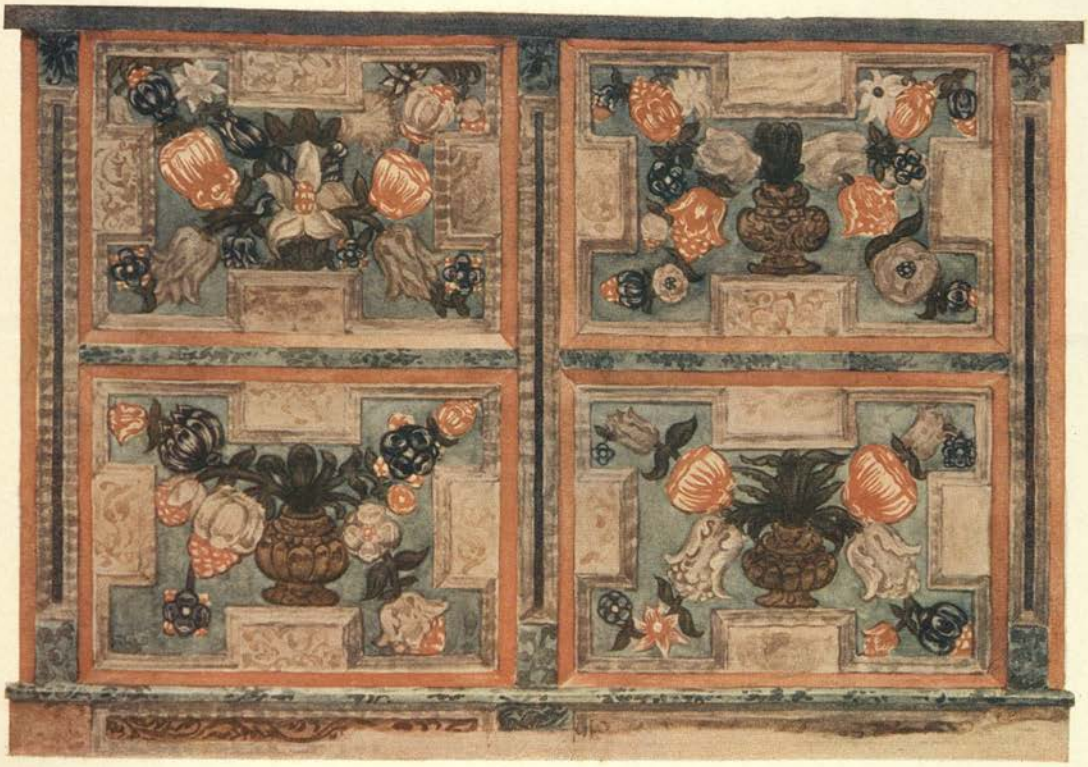


289 CARVED BACK OF A CHURCH PEW FROM VOLOGDA

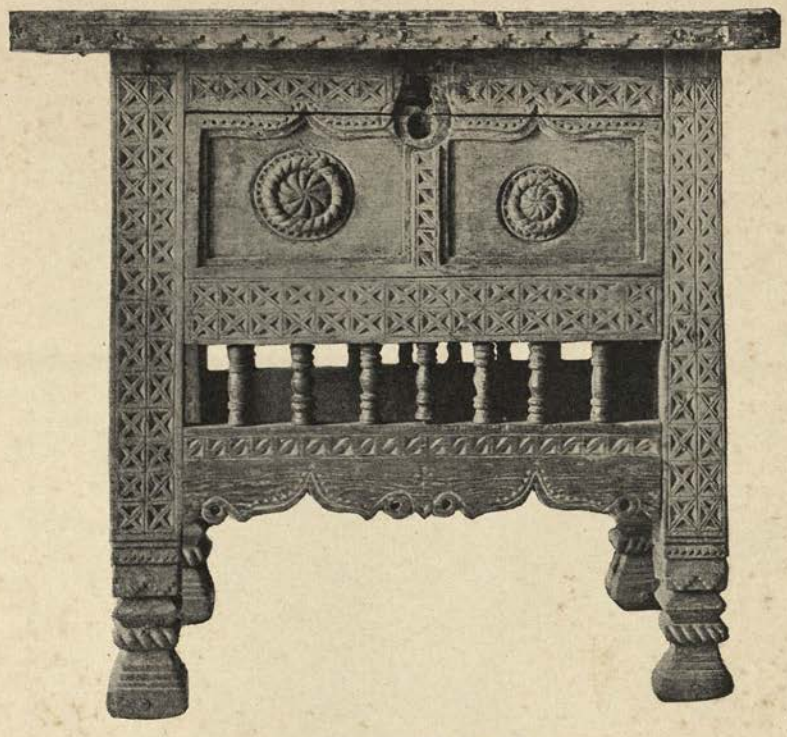
290 CARVED TABLE FROM YAROSLAVL



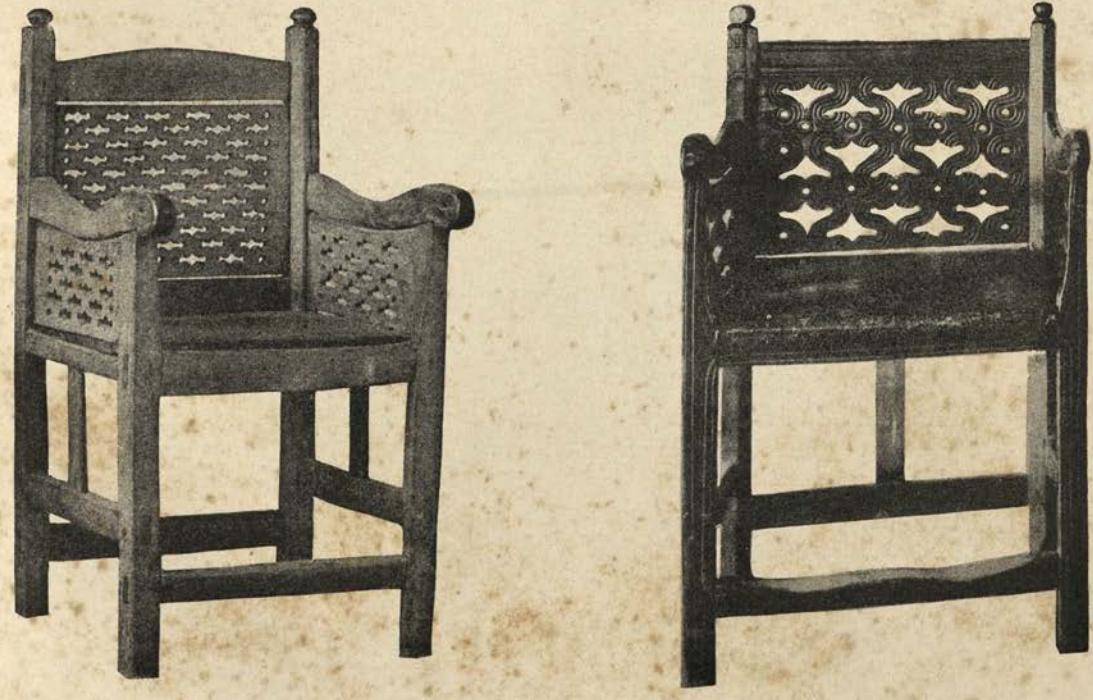
291 CARVED "CANDLE" TABLE FROM YAROSLAVL



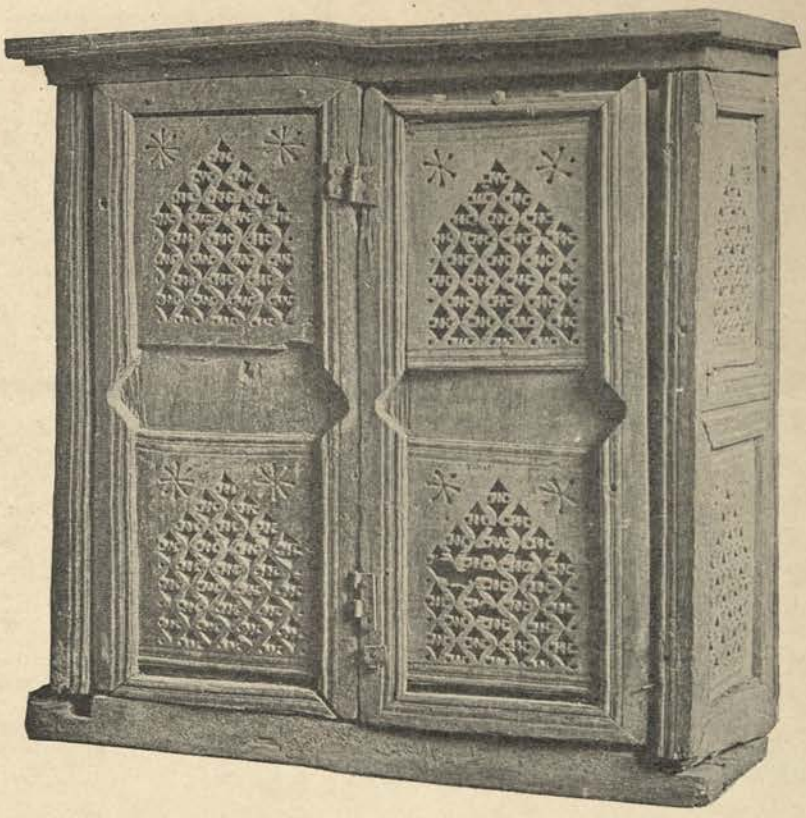
291A PAINTED FRONT OF A STALL, FROM A CHURCH IN PERM



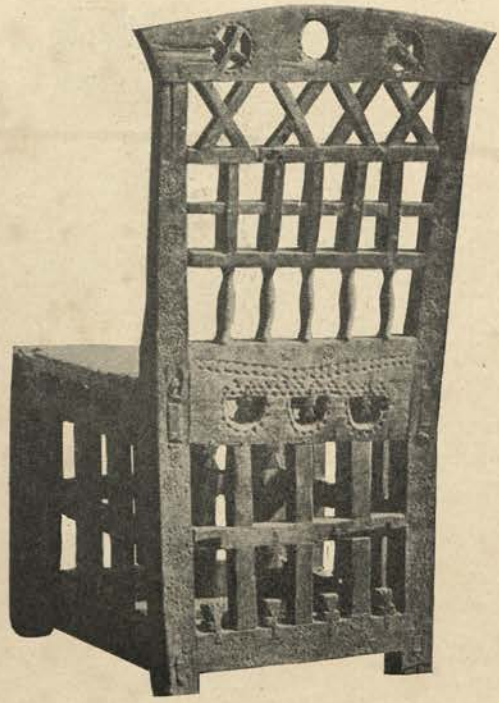
292 CARVED TABLE

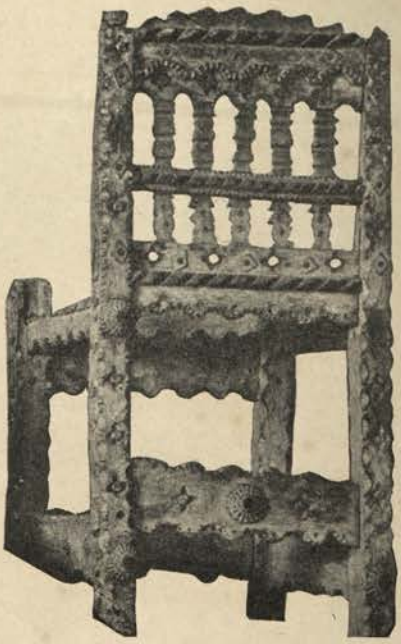


293 AND 294 CARVED ARMCHAIRS



295 CARVED CUPBOARD

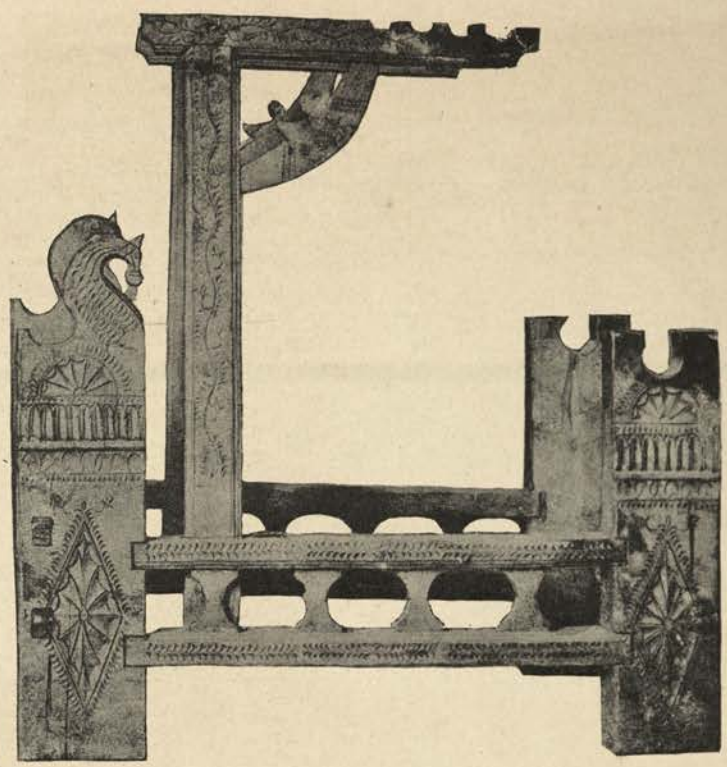




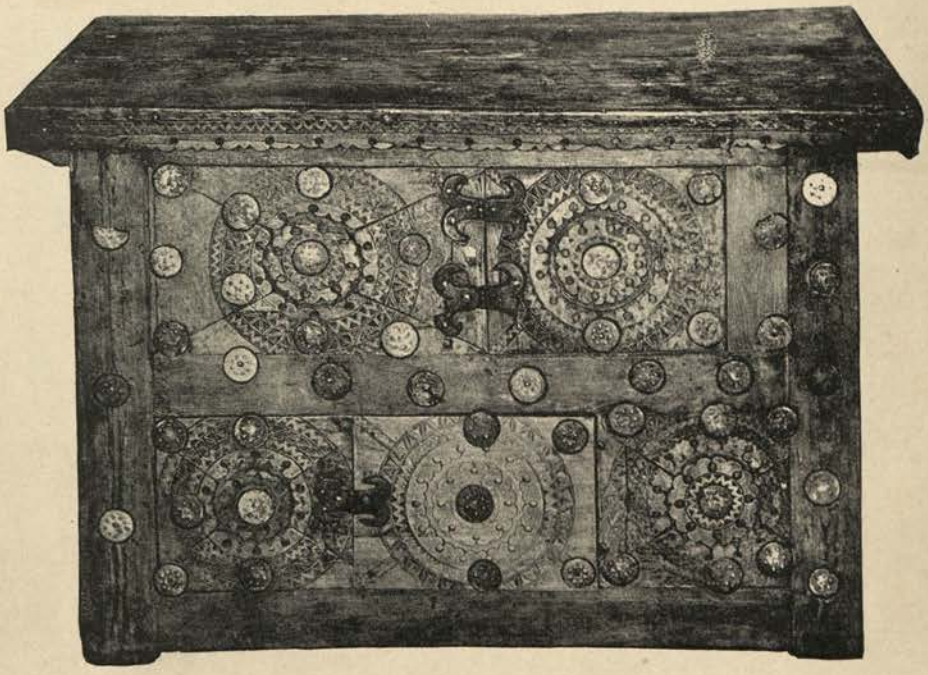
296 AND 297 CARVED CHAIRS

298 CARVED WINDOW-FRAME AND SHUTTERS

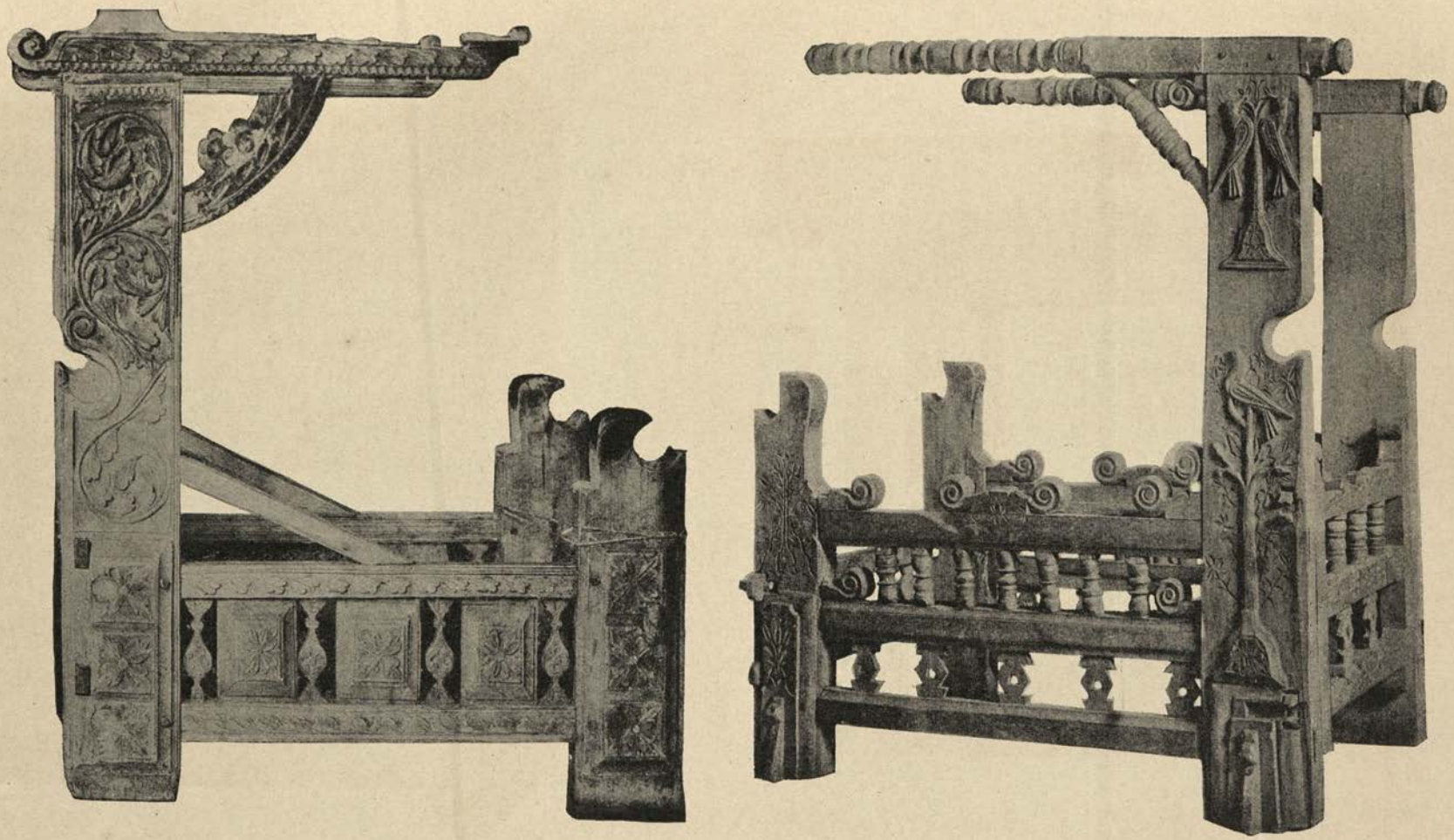
299 CARVED CUPBOARD



300 CARVED WEAVING-LOOM



301 CARVED "CANDLE" TABLE WITH METAL FITTINGS, FROM YAROSLAVL



302 AND 303 CARVED WEAVING-LOOMS

304 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN OLONETZ

305 ENTRANCE STAIRWAY TO A PEASANT'S HOUSE IN OLONETZ

306 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN VOLOGDA

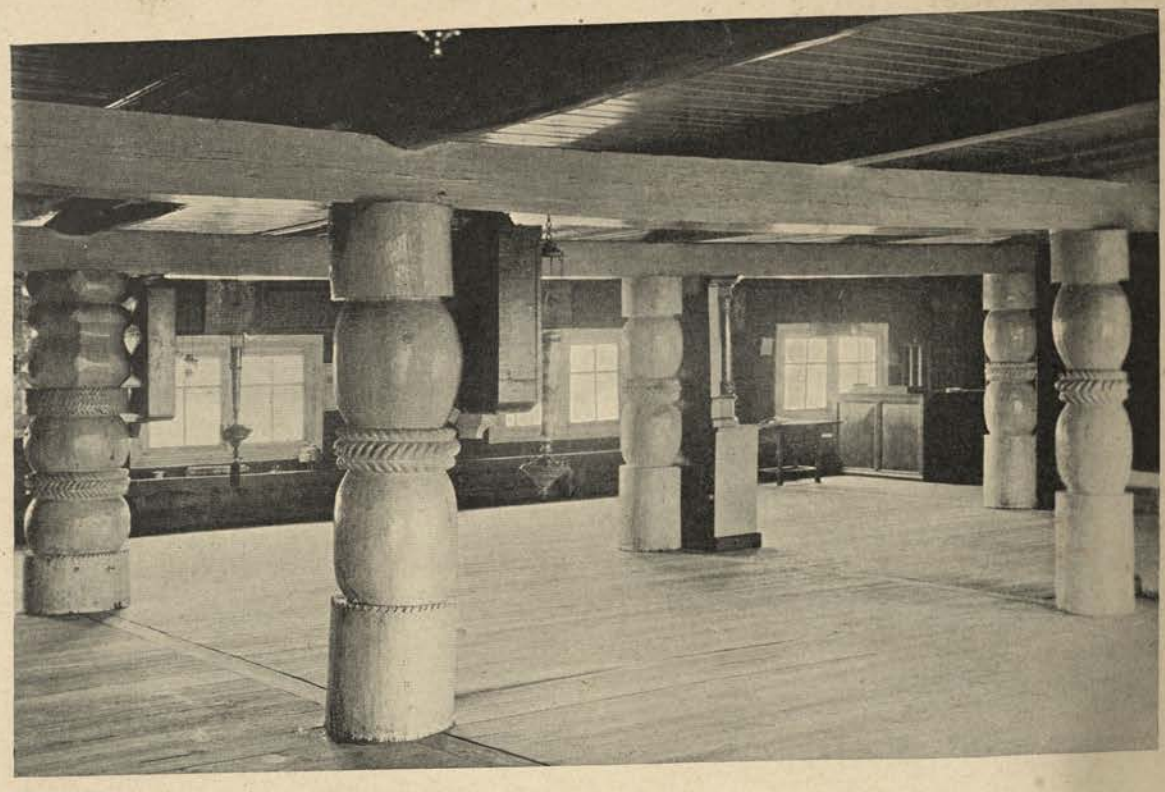
307 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN OLONETZ

308 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN NORTH RUSSIA

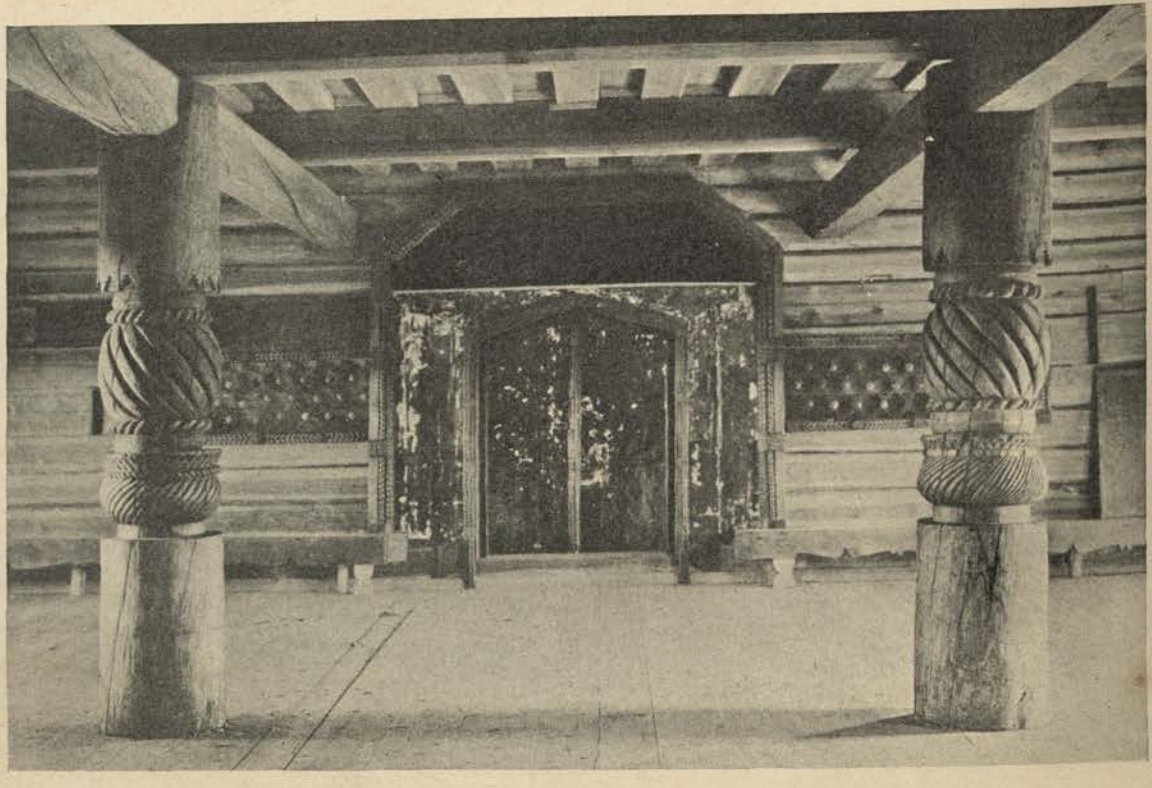
309 GRANARY IN NORTH RUSSIA

310 ENTRANCE STAIRWAY TO A PEASANT'S HOUSE IN ARCHANGEL

311 CORNER OF A CONVENT CHAPEL IN ARCHANGEL



312 INTERIOR OF A VILLAGE CHURCH IN ARCHANGEL



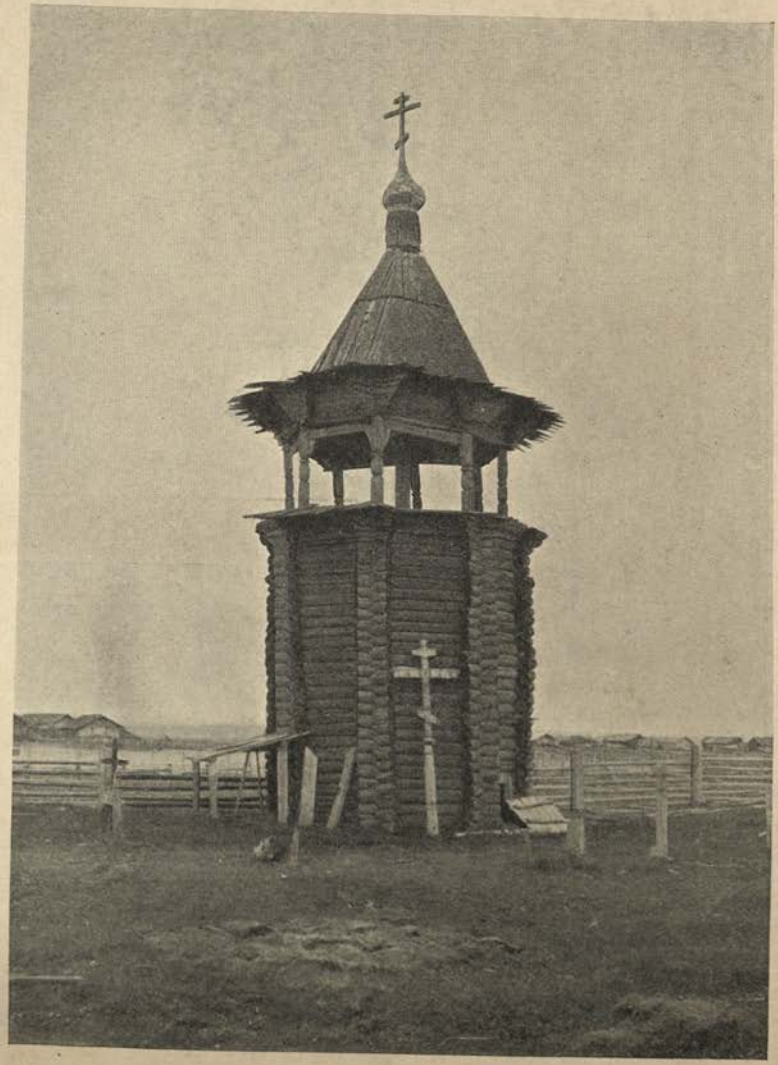
313 INTERIOR OF A VILLAGE CHURCH IN VOLOGDA

314 CHURCH IN OLONETZ (DATE 1718)

315 VILLAGE CHURCH IN NORTH RUSSIA

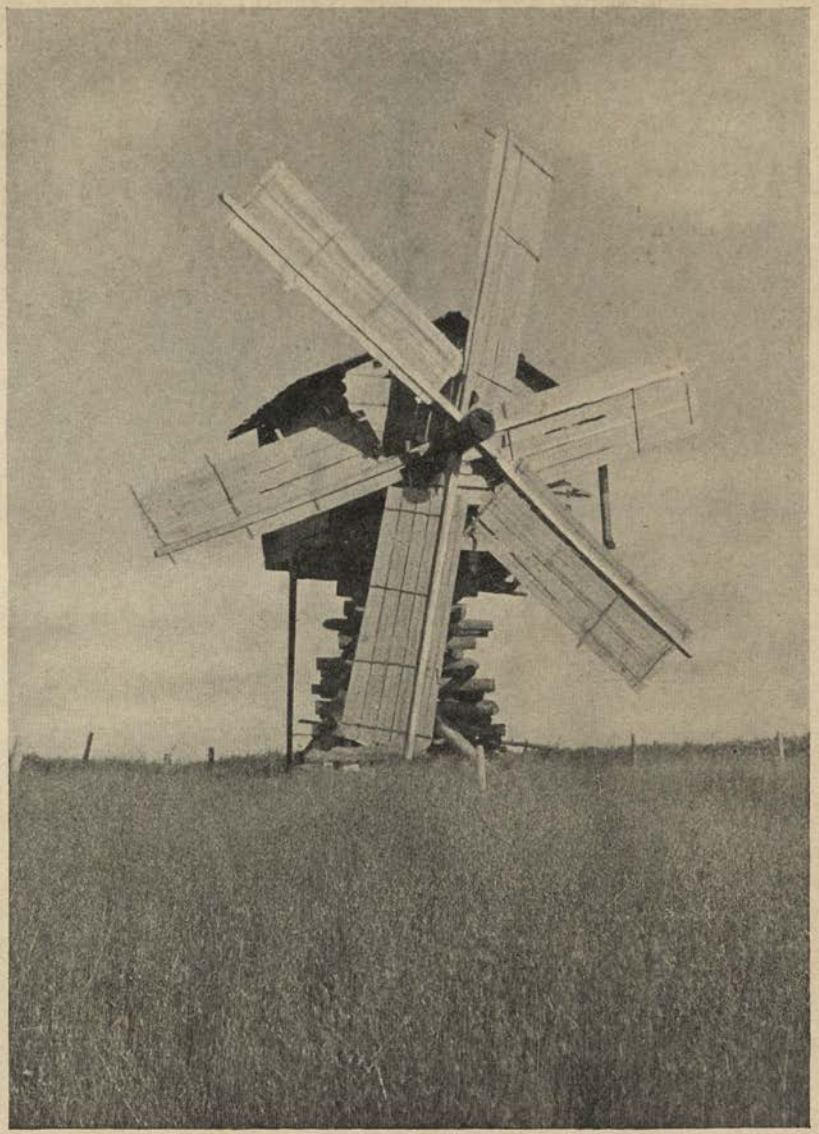
316 CHURCH IN NORTH RUSSIA

317 BELFRY IN NORTH RUSSIA



318 BELFRY IN NORTH RUSSIA

319 VILLAGE CEMETERY IN ARCHANGEL



320 WINDMILL IN NORTH RUSSIA

321 CUT PAPER DESIGN

LITTLE RUSSIA (THE UKRAINE)

THE PEASANT ART OF LITTLE RUSSIA (THE UKRAINE). By N. Bilachevsky.

SOME twenty or thirty years ago the whole of the large territory of the Ukraine, every corner of it, was still rich in peasant art; indeed it may be truly said the Ukrainians were an artistic race. The distinction between the lower and the upper classes, so characteristic a feature of the feudal system then in existence in the Ukraine, had as its result the preservation by the peasantry of the peculiar ancient customs, beliefs, and modes of life.

Highly gifted and with a strong leaning towards beauty, the Ukrainians tried to respond to this disposition in their own way, without, at the same time, overstepping the boundaries of peasant life, which was the life of ninety-five per cent. of the population. They possessed a rich stock of artistic forms of expression, the result of the work of centuries, and this was a valuable asset to their fine æsthetic sense. In this way, while the upper classes of the "Little Russian" community, forgetting whatever they possessed of their own in the province of applied art, lived in surroundings borrowed from the West, the peasant folk clung to their own national art.

However, from the second half of the nineteenth century, when the feudal system was abolished, a change came over the social and especially the economic conditions of the country, and the old traditions of peasant life began to give way. This process was reflected in the peasant art, as it was in everything else. The demand for objects of adornment began to be satisfied now, not with the creations of the peasants' own artistic fancy, as was the case hitherto, but with factory-made articles which were quickly adapted to the roughly formulated requirements of the peasant.

The decline of taste and the flooding of the villages with factory-made goods gradually caused at first a change for the worse in the productions of the people's art, and then the total disappearance of that art.

This process is not, however, yet completed, and the life of the Ukrainian peasant is still preserving much of what is very individual, highly artistic, and strongly characteristic of the spiritual personality of the Ukrainian race. There are still many possibilities for the study of this art, and for making observations on it as on a living thing and one necessary in household life.

Apart from being highly interesting as a branch of the world's art, the artistic productions of the Ukrainian peasant present a special attraction for the student, as the only surviving remnant of the whole national Ukrainian art which flourished vigorously in former times in all classes of the "Little Russian" community.

There are still to be found many examples of this ancient period of Ukrainian art, which prove the high level that was reached by it.

The history of the Ukraine makes sad reading; it is full of records of an unequal struggle for preserving the national individuality of its civilisation and religion against the pressure of enemies on all sides. The geographical position of the country made it a buffer-state between Europe and the nomad tribes; while this was the source of weakness of the Ukraine, its neighbours, Poland and Muscovy, considered it a "bone of contention." One after the other, in succession, they became her masters; they intrigued to prevent the country from becoming settled, and they denied it the advantages of peace, in order to keep it weak. Such a state of affairs could not but be reflected on the national art of the people. The conditions under which art could flourish were wanting, and in spite of other favouring circumstances—the natural gifts of the people, their high standard of taste, and their strong innate inclination towards beauty—the results were not what they might have been under other circumstances.

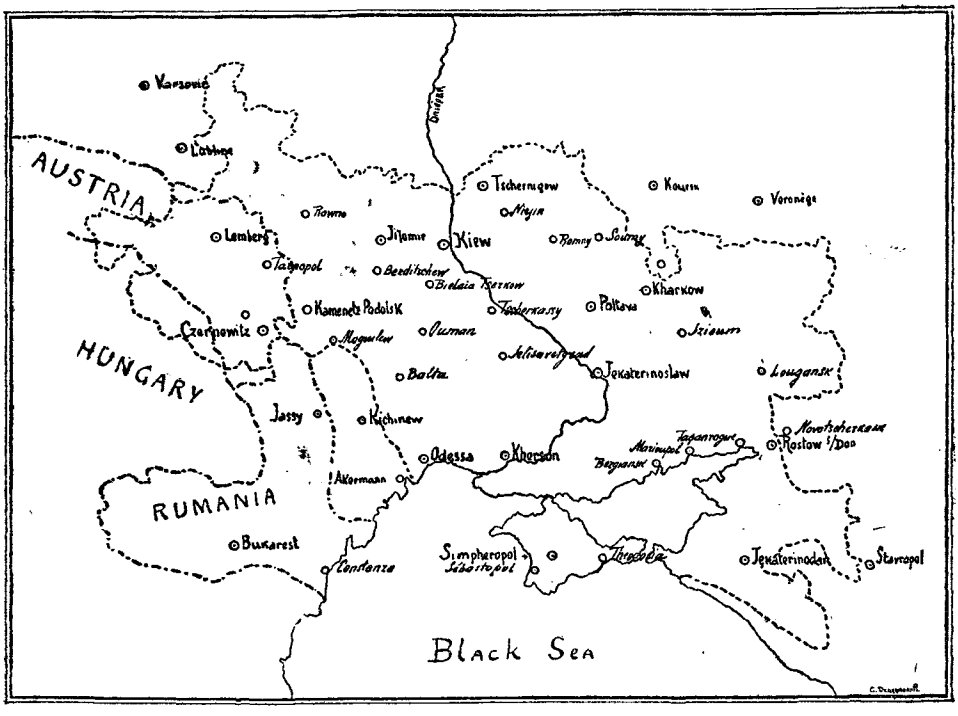
The moment the people began to assume a semblance of tranquillity, as was the case, for instance, at the end of the seventeenth century, the inexhaustible fountain of national art was sure to manifest itself immediately and with vigour. The artistic tendencies would penetrate everywhere, they would embrace all the different sides of the national life, finding ample possibilities of application and realisation.

The struggle for independence, and the ill success of the Ukrainian people in that struggle, produced terrible conditions of life, conditions which restricted the free exercise of their individuality, ruined their national self-consciousness, and resulted in the sudden decrease and final atrophy of the energy of this naturally joyous and lively race. This process affected art as it did all other sides of life, and its influence on it was certainly very strong and of a highly negative kind.

The denationalisation of the upper classes of the Ukrainian community was one of the results of these vicissitudes, and it had an independent and an enormously ruinous effect on Ukrainian art. The sphere of application of this art narrowed, its means grew poorer, and the number of persons of culture and wealth who gave their talents and support to it ever decreased. The introduction of serfdom widened the distance between the two classes, and the process terminated, as far as art was concerned, in the almost complete expulsion of Ukrainian art from the house of the landowner. The cities, too, lost their national characteristics, and thus it was

only in places distant, one might say, from the vanities of modern life, under the thatched roofs of peasant houses, that Ukrainian art still found hospitality.

Hitherto but little attention has been given to the study of this national art of the past, and the fact is the more regrettable when we know that many valuable specimens, which could be found in great numbers a short time ago, have now disappeared.



LITTLE RUSSIA (THE UKRAINE)

It is true, several works on Ukrainian ornament, especially on embroidery, were published in the 'seventies (the works of M. Volkov, Mmes. Kosacz and Litvinova). To the same time belongs also the commencement of the work of collecting objects relating to the life and art of the Ukrainian peasant, which was made by the Kieff South Russian Branch of the Imperial Geographical Society. But this branch was soon closed, and thus the end of the nineteenth century has contributed practically nothing of importance to the advancement of that study.

It was only at the beginning of the present century that the real work of study of Ukrainian art commenced with the collecting of specimens. The establishment of museums in several of the large cities of the Ukraine (Kieff, Kharkov, Katerinoslav) coincided with

that period, and the revival of other museums (those of Poltava, Tchernihov, Zhitomir, Kamenetz, Kherson) greatly helped the work of the pioneers. At the present time there are already large collections in existence. Still, they are not yet sufficiently comprehensive to give any clear and full idea of the Ukrainian peasant art in all its branches; this goal is not yet even in view. Every fresh excursion into the country produces something so strikingly new that it often opens up new fields of applied art; sometimes it seems as if the stock of articles in possession of the peasants was inexhaustible.

Lately the peasant industries have been studied from the point of purely practical considerations. The decline of the people's wealth and the impoverishment of the peasant class have called forth certain legislative measures, amongst which the endeavours to develop the so-called "kustarny" industry should be mentioned, as it is an artistic work and the only work that can compete with the factory articles. Specimens of the old work have been taken as examples, and artists have been invited to take part in this new movement, and, by these means, the art is being permanently preserved; a kind of revival of the peasant art has thus to a certain extent been brought about. An effort has been made to better the economic conditions of the peasantry by encouraging the making of objects of art in the peasants' homes—objects copied from old models.

The Ukrainian people are nearly all agriculturists, and the comparatively favourable conditions of soil and climate in the Ukraine did not encourage the development of the "kustarny" or domestic manufacturing industries for profit. The articles that the people made were destined not for the market, but mostly for their own use; but with the decline of their economic conditions the peasants began to work not only for themselves, but also for a limited circle of customers. Some "zemstvos" began to assist peasants, especially the "zemstvos" of Poltava, of Tchernigoff, and quite lately that of Kieff. This help manifested itself in the establishing of special schools, in sending instructors, in supplying peasants with the raw material, in organising warehouses, publishing albums illustrating the old specimens of national art, and so on. But so far, on account of the comparative costliness of the "kustarny" articles, they find only a limited number of purchasers. It is mostly the wealthy classes who can understand and appreciate their peculiar beauty, and the peasants themselves cannot have them at their own disposal.

As is the case with every people, the Ukrainians expressed their leaning towards beauty first of all in the adornment of their

own personal appearance, then in embellishing their houses and their appurtenances. At first the artistic impulse manifested itself in the design of the dress, and in the arrangement of its different colours and of the stuffs composing it; then in the adornment of the head, and lastly in ornaments in the narrower sense of that word.

In spite of the rapid replacement of hand-made cloth by imported factory-produced material, the Ukrainians' national dress is still habitually worn in many places, and we are in a position to judge of this beautiful apparel. As everywhere else, so in the Ukraine the greatest attention has been given to the holiday wear, and especially to that of women. In some parts of the Ukraine (for instance, in the small northern strip of the country) the national dress is marked by rather excessive vividness of colour, and even by a crudeness in the relative arrangement; but the characteristic dress of the centre of the country and of the south is marked by a quiet harmony, which sometimes, as in the province of Poltava, is represented by a combination of dark colours, relieved only by the uncovered white sleeves and the hem of the white shirt. These parts of the shirt and—especially in the case of men—the front of it are usually ornamented by embroidery.

In the north of the Ukraine the most primitive embroidery prevails. It is marked by a geometric design, and it reminds one strongly of the White Russian and even Finnish embroidery; its colour is almost exclusively red. In the central part of the Ukraine, where the individuality of the people has developed more fully than anywhere else, the embroidery varies. The most typical of the central Ukrainian embroidery are the so-called "merezhki" and "vyrizuvania," which are completely devoid of coloured threads, or a combination of this "lace" embroidery and the ordinary embroidery, or, lastly, the ordinary white embroidery. If coloured threads are added in the latter, it is only done so very sparingly. In the south and south-west the coloured embroidery is more in evidence than in the central parts, but it is also characterised by its quiet and rather dark colours. The designs of embroidery, although preserving in the central Ukraine as in the south the geometrical base, by processes of development have been extended to the inclusion of the floral motifs conventionalised and adapted to the material (linen). It is worth noting that the leaning towards floral forms permeates the whole of Ukrainian ornamentation, while the Muscovite embroidery is overwhelmingly geometrical and includes elements from the animal world and even the architectural.

In some parts of central, and more frequently in the north of

Ukraine, one still finds the "plahta," a peculiar kind of skirt made of thick woollen or even silk stuff, which reminds one of the Scotch kilt; but the designs, though in squares, are more elaborate, and the colouring somewhat more varied. Some thirty years ago these articles were worn all over the Ukraine. Young women donned bright "plahti" of light colours, the elderly women dark ones. Among the old "plahti" very beautiful specimens can sometimes be found. The material of which they are made is hand-woven, and the yarn spun and dyed by the peasants. The garment is made of two lengths of material, stitched together edge to edge half-way. The stitching is done in coloured wools or silks and forms an ornamental border. The material is then folded across, so that the unstitched edges, lying over the stitched part, expose the pattern. The "plahta" is then wrapped round the body to form a double skirt without gathering the stitched edges at the back, while in front the skirt is open, so producing the necessary "spring," and this is covered by a plain piece of stuff forming a kind of apron. The apron itself is often made of a hand-woven stuff; it is sometimes ornamented by a geometrical design (as in the north), either embroidered, or, as is the case mostly now, simply printed. The "plahta" and apron are fastened to the waist by a girdle—a mere narrow, coloured strip ("kraïka") in Northern Ukraine, and a wide sash of plaited red wool in Central Ukraine.

The men's dress is simpler. It consists usually of a white shirt with wide sleeves, ornamented with embroidery round the collar, down the breast, and round the cuffs, and of wide, white linen trousers. The overcoat—men's and women's alike—is called the "svyta," and is made of a home-spun cloth of different shades—white, grey, and brown. In the olden times the most popular colour was white. The "svyta" is made tight at the waist; it is usually trimmed with coloured strips and cords, and it is sometimes embroidered on the lower part and also at the back. Such may be seen in Volhynia.

The men's footwear consists of long top-boots, while the women use the "tchereviki," a kind of shoe, though they wear long boots as well. These are made of coloured leather, green and red; the red boots are still very popular everywhere in the Ukraine. The coloured footwear was used in earlier days not only by women but also by men, but now this fashion has gone out altogether for men. In the most northern parts of the Ukraine the "lapti" or plaited bark shoes are worn sometimes; they are universally used in Great Russia.

Above we have described the Ukrainian dress at its simplest; in reality it varies according to locality, and to the degree of the

wealth of those who wear it. The change of time has had its strong influence on the peasant dress, and the fashions are followed in the village not less strictly than in the city. Thus, for example, a new women's dress has been evolved, called the "corsetka"—a kind of long sleeveless jacket made of a manufactured cloth; it is quite common in the Ukraine, but it began to change lately according to the town fashions. A typical coat for men is represented by the "zhupan," a tight-fitting long summer-coat; now the town waistcoats and ordinary town jackets have become fashionable.

The local tastes and influences of fashion are especially noticeable in the head-gear. Although as regards men it is fairly monotonous, consisting of a fur or woollen cap ("shapka"), and in the summer of a straw hat ("bril"), or of a wide-spreading "cachquette," the women's head-dress is marked by complexity and variety. A typical Ukrainian girl, whose hair is usually braided in two plaits coiled round her head, adorns it with wreaths of fresh or artificial flowers, and an abundance of brightly coloured long ribbons hang from her head down her back. Especially picturesque is the head-dress of a bride. A married woman, according to a uniform custom strictly observed in the whole of the Ukraine, must cover her hair; for this purpose she wears a special sort of cap with a stiff frame, made of coloured linen adorned with embroidery, brocade, or, in the old days, even of cloth-of-gold. These caps are of different shapes—round, square, or cylinder form ("otchipok"); round them a long transparent veil is wound ("namitka"). The "namitka" itself was usually woven at home of home-spun fine threads, or from home-spun silk; the ends of this veil hung loosely down the back. At present the "namitka" is seldom to be met with, but the "otchipok" is usually draped in a sort of machine-made coloured kerchief.

Great care is given to the adornment of the neck and breast. For this purpose long rows of glass and coral beads are worn by the women; the gold or silver coins, crucifixes and medallions, are hung from them in the centre ("ducatch"). In olden times the production of these metal ornaments, as well as of earrings, rings, clasps, &c., constituted one of the home industries of the Ukraine. Gradually, however, the factory has almost completely ruined it, and now even the very custom of wearing these metal adornments is dying out, and it is only in the Carpathians, amongst the so-called "Hutsuls," that the custom is still fully preserved. They wear them extensively, and the production of these ornaments is widespread among them.

In the winter a warm white sheepskin coat, called "**cozhuh**,"

is worn, sometimes covered with cloth. From the point of view of applied art, the ornaments made of coloured leather which are worn on the "cozhuh" are worth mentioning. These ornaments adorn the skirts of the coat; the designs are old, traditional, and evolved specially for this purpose; these leather ornaments are sometimes replaced by an embroidery made of coloured wool. Sometimes such embroidery adorns not only the skirts of the coat but also the back.

It is impossible here to give a full description of all the details of the Ukrainian national dress. All that can be attempted is to give a general idea. The essential characteristics of the dress are its elegance, its freedom from exaggeration, and the details of its ornament. The more primitive features are to be found in its traditional cut, and in the arrangement of the colours of the costumes belonging to the north and the north-west; while in Central Ukraine, where the life of the people has found its fullest development, we meet with a dress that, in spite of its simplicity, would satisfy the highest and most refined requirements of taste.

The climate, the natural surroundings, and also, of course, the character of the Ukrainian people, have had their effect upon the evolution of the house, yard, and relative arrangement of various buildings, the plan of the house, its adornment, and the general aspect of the village as a whole. The Ukrainian village is of an entirely different type from that of the Muscovite; whereas in the latter case the houses are grouped together, lined in rows, and overlook the street, the houses of the Ukrainian villages are hidden in the orchards, strewn about without any definite plan or arrangement, and the whole village is composed of a number of picturesque "corners" ("coot"). An abundance of verdure, the inevitable attachment to every house of even a small orchard, for which the Ukraine is so famous, a mass of flowers, due to the fact that the Ukrainian villages are usually situated on the banks of a lake or a river, all this gives to the Ukrainian village an especially attractive and picturesque appearance. It is true that lately, thanks to the growth of population, the former homeliness and attractiveness of the Ukrainian village have begun to disappear, and the yards are being divided into portions and used for building purposes; still, the general character of the Ukrainian village is preserved.

In the north and north-west the grouping of the houses resembles rather more that of the Muscovite villages, and so do also the inner arrangement of the yard and the relative positions of the various buildings. In the north, in the forest parts of the Ukraine, the house and household buildings are more closely connected, and are

often joined under the same roof, sometimes enclosing a quadrangle, also roofed over, which is entered by a single gate. Quite a different arrangement prevails in the centre and south. Here the yard occupies a much larger space, and the house and domestic buildings stand separately. In the case of the more well-to-do families, even the "comora" (a dark room where all sorts of provisions are kept) stands apart; other buildings of the household are the "povitka," a shed for the cows, sheep, carts, and field implements; the "sazh," or pigsty; and, lastly, the "clunya," the place where grain is stored. The "clunya" is detached even in Northern Ukraine. It is very often situated quite far from the house, on the outskirts of the village.

The Ukrainian house ("khata") has undoubtedly passed through several stages of development before it reached its present state. It has been gradually evolved out of an earthen hut. As a relic of ancient times in the northernmost region of the Ukraine, the so-called "smoking khati" can be seen, devoid of chimneys, with the smoke issuing through a hole in the wall. But in the rest of the Ukraine, especially in the most advanced central and southern parts, the peasant-house has long since become a comfortable living-place, attractive without and clean and tidy within.

The Ukrainian "khata" is, as a rule, built of wood. In the north a thick wood is used, in the south it is of a medium size. In the south "khati" are also to be found with walls made of plaited reeds, and covered with a thick layer of clay. Sometimes the whole substance of the wall is composed of clay, without any reeds or wood. A distinguishing feature of a Ukrainian "khata," from whatever material it may be built, is that it is invariably white-washed. In those cases when the necessary white clay or chalk is not to be found on the spot, they are brought from other districts. The roof is thatched and has four slopes, with wide overhanging eaves in front. To the entrance, always placed in the centre of the front wall, is often added a porch ("ganok"). Sometimes, especially in the older houses, at one end of the "khata" is an open veranda ("piddasheh").

The white glittering walls of the "khati," their brown thatched roofs immersed in the background of rich verdure of all possible shades, all flooded with abundant rays of the Ukrainian sun, make the appearance of the Ukrainian village extremely beautiful. The gently outlined landscape, which is so characteristic of the Ukraine, is here accentuated by the fine sense of beauty of the people, who are permeated by the influences of their beautiful surroundings.

The "khati" and all other household buildings of the Ukrainian

peasant, except the "clunya," are lacking in height. The reason of it is to be found in some practical considerations: the low building is more easily kept warm and not so difficult to clean and repair. When these considerations are immaterial we observe an opposite characteristic. Thus in the architecture of the churches, which in the Ukraine had developed a highly national and quaint style, the great height of the building had become a prominent feature. This principle manifests itself in the wooden as in the stone-built churches, but it found a more obvious way of expressing itself in the churches built of wood; therefore it is these churches that we must take as the most typical. The height and the spaciousness were suggested by means of a gradually narrowing frame. This was the arrangement within. Without, with a view to giving an artistically architectural appearance to the building, the whole body of it was cut by a series of narrow cornices, covered with a roofing, into several quasi stories that were terminated by a dome. The building, having a quadrilateral base, with its corners often cut off, represented a mono-domed church. Three such buildings put together in a row, with corresponding alterations in their proportions, formed a tri-domed church. This is the most usual type of church in the Ukraine. The addition of a single other such unit on each side made it into a five-domed church, which is also fairly common, especially in the more flourishing villages. Very seldom to be met with is the further development of the same type—the nine-domed building.

This type of church is common (with slight alterations) to both Russian and Austrian parts of the Ukraine. Here it had its origin, and it represents an original and independent product of the creative art of the Ukrainian people; the only analogy to this style of wooden architecture is to be found in the picturesque wooden churches of the Scandinavian countries. The building of these churches is now a thing of the past. The few surviving examples are doomed. What is erected now, what has been built for the last fifty or sixty years, has nothing in common with this old style. The new churches in Ukraine are built in the quasi-Muscovite style, striking for its want of taste, and absolutely disconnected with local tradition.

As to the adornment of the house, here, as in every other sphere, the same care manifests itself, the same absence of the superfluous, the same restraint. By terracing the four slopes of the roof an element of variety is brought into the otherwise plain surface of the ceiling. The quiet whiteness of the walls is accentuated by the coloured panelling along the skirting and round the doors and

windows. Some of the older "khati" have a cornice corresponding to the eaves. The cornice is of wood adorned with carving. The carving on the window frames and the crude colouring of the shutters that is to be met with now, are of recent origin and have been brought to the Ukraine by foreign, mostly Muscovite, carpenters.

A typical Ukrainian "khata" is divided into two parts by a hall placed in the centre. One part serves for dwelling purposes, the other is called the "comora" and is used as a storing place for provisions, clothes, &c. This latter part is usually left without ornament; very often it is not even whitewashed. But in the hall, over the frame of the door leading into the dwelling part of the "khata," one very often finds some embellishment. This is as a rule a painted design of a widely spread type, executed in water-colours. It usually represents some conventional floral form and is laid on with a firm, confident hand. Such designs adorn panels, ovens, and walls; sometimes even the outer walls are covered with them. The white of the walls, kept in a state of permanent cleanliness by the care of the Ukrainian women, furnishes an excellent background for this painting. The colours mostly used are brown, red, and blue. It is worth noting that the wall-painting in the interior of the "khata" is placed on the cleanest part of it, the so-called "pocootyeh," that is, the corner facing the entrance door, where the holy pictures are placed and the large table is situated. The rest of the "khata" is honoured with far less adornment.

This wall-painting has lately been replaced in many districts by ornaments cut out of coloured paper, or even by pieces of wall-paper, which latter practice is of course no furtherance of the original custom. As an exception, in some localities of the Ukraine old "khati" are to be found, belonging to some well-to-do Cossack families, where the wall-adornment is of a different character: here the walls are not whitewashed, but covered with smoothly polished boards, which in the "pocootyeh" are painted with oil-colour. The design consists usually of flowers.

The art of painting, hitherto so widely spread, is now dying out. It has been a naïve art and a peculiar one, which has been closely connected with all the other branches of peasant craft. Specimens of oil-painting are to be met with most often on coffers ("scryni"), where the most valued belongings of a person are preserved. When a girl gets married she is supplied with a "scrynia" by her parents. The same kind of painting often adorns cupboards and shelves ("mysnykis"), wooden plates and long jugs, also the ledges on which the holy pictures stand, and, lastly, the "svolok" or central beam supporting the ceiling.

In some parts of the Ukraine specimens of a higher class of painting are still to be found. Amongst them the religious pictures and family subjects are worthy of notice. A picture of "Cossack Mamaï," that personification of a free-loving and daring spirit, is especially popular.

The majority of the articles mentioned, all these "scryni," "mysnykis," &c., besides the painted ornament they bear, are also mostly adorned with carved designs. The art of wood-carving, however, is not equally developed in all parts of the Ukraine, but is at its highest along the middle course of the Dnieper. Carving is usually to be found on plates, jugs, cake-moulds, boxes, spoons, sticks, &c. It is usual also to carve the backs of sledges, carts, and yokes. A very remarkable carving, of very ancient origin, is to be met with on some of the windmills, beehives, &c.

The leading characteristics of the designs in the Ukrainian wood-carving are common to those found in the west of Europe. As in all other branches of peasant art, so in this particular one, we see the Ukrainian people treating the common European subject in its own peculiar way. The designs of the carved ornaments are mostly geometrical with the popular rosework. But the leaning towards floral motifs, in spite of the difficulties that the execution of them with the primitive tools presents, sometimes manifests itself even here, although in a naïve form. Sometimes the two means of ornamentation, painting and carving, are united, but very few of the older specimens of that kind are preserved, while the new ones are of little artistic value.

In a country of rigorous winters like the Ukraine the stove naturally plays a very important part in the "khata." It is now a large construction, gradually evolved by many stages out of the original hole in the earth, and like other productions of the Ukrainian peasant, it has in its evolution followed the lines of beauty; so that in its present form, with its rich panelling, its niches, its shelves, and the harmonious grouping of its parts, it presents a construction satisfactory from the architectural point of view.

The stove is usually built of ordinary clay or of brick, but when used for warming purposes and not for cooking it is generally made of tiles. At the present time these stoves, as separate constructions, are seldom met with in the peasant houses, though some time ago the manufacture of the tiles was widely spread. The tiles were sometimes made of fired clay, unglazed, and ornamented with low relief forms (plants, birds, human figures, and also many different combinations of geometrical ornament similar to that used in carving); some were covered with glazes of various colours; and lastly, there

were those with a smooth surface, ornamented with designs in enamel, designs identical with those found on plates, jugs, &c. Thanks to the richness and variety of clays to be found in the Ukraine, suitable for the purposes of ceramic art (even the fine china clay abounds in some parts), the art of the potter has been carried on since early times.

The present-day Ukrainian pottery is interesting in many ways. It is partly so because many survivals of the past are preserved in it, and also because it possesses a variety of original shapes and ornaments. In response to different requirements of the peasant household various articles of pottery were evolved: those for cooking, those for the table, for preserving milk, keeping drinks, &c. There is an extremely ancient kind of bottle for fermented drinks made in the forms of animals. With the variety of shapes corresponds the variety of painted ornament, and different localities produce different designs, although all met with in the Ukraine are undoubtedly based on the same main ideas. The methods of painting are of ancient origin. It is done with the help of a horn or funnel from which issues a thick colouring. The ornament found on the pottery, thanks to the freedom which is allowed here to the artisan, is often very complicated. There are plain designs consisting of small curly lines, scrolls, or parallel lines, and there are also combinations of curves, sprays of roughly conventional flowers. In some localities where pottery is an old industry, art has gone even farther. Pictures of plants and flowers, birds, fishes, and human figures are painted on the pottery, and some of these show a high development of skill and much taste. Yet most of the artists are illiterate.

A special branch of the ceramic art is represented by the toys, and this also is of ancient origin. The most popular toys are those representing various animals, fantastic human dolls, horsemen, &c. Each of these toys is fitted with a whistle, and hence the toys are called "whistles" ("svystuni").

Considerably less than the earthenware, is spread amongst the peasants of the Ukraine the glassware. In the "khata" of the peasant it is rare even now; it was much rarer before, except in the houses of the well-to-do Cossacks and townsfolk. Glass that can be found now in the villages is of factory origin and has nothing interesting about it. In times past there were a great number of small glass factories in the Ukraine, but they are mostly extinct now in consequence of the development of industry. These small glass factories, "hooti" as they were called, used to manufacture, by means of highly primitive methods without use of models of any

kind, various glass articles founded on old originals, and thus preserving the old tradition as to the forms which were beautiful in their naïve simplicity. A great variety of bottles in the shape of animals and different objects were produced in these "hooti." They were intended for expensive drinks and were used on great occasions, festivals, &c.

Articles made of metal, notably those of copper, were even rarer in the Ukraine than was the glassware. But the few examples that are still to be found testify to the fact that in the olden times this class of article was much more numerous than it is now, and some of the specimens possess great beauty of shape and ornamentation. In most cases the copper article was made to serve as a bottle for various drinks, for the old Ukraine was famous for the variety and excellence of its drinks. In our time the things made of copper are to be met almost exclusively as water jugs, or big kettles ("kazani"), serving the purposes of preparing mead on occasions of the festival of the patron of the local church.

In the eighteenth century and before, tin articles, mostly of Western European origin, were largely used in the Ukraine. But they were seldom to be met with in peasant houses, as seldom, in fact, as were silver articles, of which only a wine-glass may still be found in the more well-to-do Cossack houses, as a relic of the past.

The articles and ornaments made of iron were not represented in the Ukraine by such a variety of shapes and skilled perfection as they were in the west of Europe; but still some of them, as, for instance, door-hinges or the iron ornaments of the wooden coffers, the locks, and especially the crosses crowning the domes of the churches, supplied a whole series of local forms which grew up independently in the Ukraine. At the present time they are dying out, and are being replaced by new ones which have nothing in common with the local art, or indeed with any art whatsoever.

One custom may be still noted as universal; this is the ornamenting of the chief corner of the room in the "khata" by long embroidered or plaited towels. Though the ornamentation of these towels is not complicated, it is met with in a fairly great variety, from the coloured stripe at the ends to a design filling up the greater part of the towel. The usual geometrical designs prevail on the whole, but in some cases the conventional floral ornament is to be found. Here, again, we see the tendency of the Ukrainian peasant art towards this kind of ornament. This tendency has its full play when the towel is ornamented by embroidery. In these cases we meet almost exclusively the floral ornament, represented by the two bouquets or blossoming plants placed at each end of the.

towel. Very often the plant is depicted growing from a pot. In spite of these general characteristics of the embroidered ornament, various localities of the Ukraine produce various specimens of the work that differ as to the richness of their composing elements and the skilfulness of their execution.

Besides these embroidered towels and shawls ("khustka") bearing the same class of embroidery on them, the old Ukrainian life gave us also some other now very rare samples of this kind of work. It is necessary to mention here the embroidery executed in silk of various colours, and gold or silver, that which served for the purposes of ornamenting cushions, blankets, and especially the robes of the priests. The examples of this work belonging to the eighteenth century, of which we possess already large collections in the various Ukrainian museums, enable us to speak of a separate style which consists of an adaptation of the borrowed elements—mostly floral—and that reaches, from the artistic point of view, a high level. It is natural in these circumstances that all "kustarny" work in the Ukraine should be but an imitation of the embroidery work of the eighteenth century.

Poor as may be a "khata," it is a general rule that opposite the entrance-door you will find a table, or a big coffer ("scrynia") serving as the table. This table, or the "scrynia," is, as a rule, covered with a white table-cloth, and the loaf of dark bread, with the knife at its side, is placed in the centre of it. The loaf is the symbol of hospitality—one of the characteristic features of the Ukrainians. The table-cloth covering the table is of the same general type as are the towels; it is embroidered all over, or, as is often the case, it has an embroidered border. In the central districts of the Ukraine it is customary to cover the table, not with the white linen cloth of the above-described type, but with a woollen rug. The same kind of rug is used for covering the beds ("pil"), and in the south it is used for covering the benches that run along the walls of the room. The making of these rugs was a very ancient and extensive industry of the Ukraine, but it is dying out now, and is supported chiefly by artificial means. As is clearly seen from the very name of the rug, which is in Ukrainian "kylym" (carpet), the industry has been introduced from the East. Thanks to the fact that wool has always been very abundant in the Ukraine, where sheep-breeding flourishes, the making of rugs has naturally become one of the staple industries of the country, and the carpets are a necessary part of the comfort of the peasant home. The characteristic feature of these carpets, when they were introduced from the East, was their geometric ornament, and they still retain

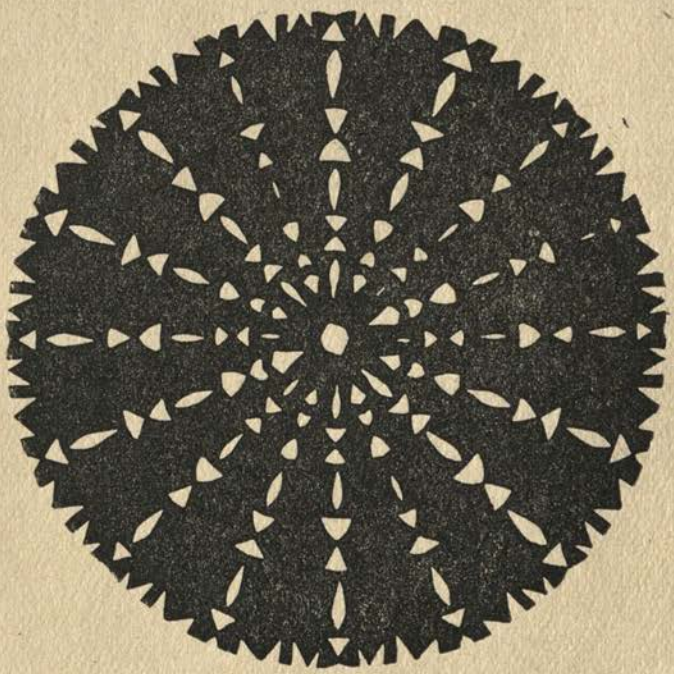
it, especially in South Ukraine. But the creative instinct of the peasant could not allow itself to be confined to geometric forms, and we see a gradual change taking place in the direction of the adoption of the floral motifs. As a result, we have a peculiar type of carpet, which, so far as we are able to judge by the collected specimens, strikes one with its extraordinary variety as regards its design, and the richness and delicacy of its colouring. There is no doubt that in more recent times, notably in the eighteenth century, the Western European influences had an effect upon the Ukrainian carpet work; but it is certain as well that these latter influences have been like the Oriental ones, adapted by the Ukrainians to suit their own artistic tastes and requirements. The most popular type of carpet, as regards the make, is the smooth one, Gobelin-like; the rough carpets are met with very seldom. As regards the dyes used, they are invariably of the vegetable order, prepared from the bark of the trees and different vegetables.

We would say a few words concerning various small articles that are used for the purpose of ornamenting the dwelling-places. To these belong the so-called "pavuki," very ingenious light figures made of straw and dyed wool, and fastened to the ceiling of the room. Sometimes these figures are ornamented with artificial flowers of home make; some kinds of flowers are employed also for ornamenting holy pictures. Bunches of sweet-smelling grasses and flowers are used for the same purpose. Sometimes a carved wooden pigeon, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, is placed in front of the holy pictures. Here also are suspended the ornamental Easter eggs ("pysanka"). The making of these eggs at Easter-time is a universal custom in the Ukraine, although the process of ornamenting them is rather a complicated one. The designs, geometrical as well as floral, have long attracted attention, and once more testify to the extraordinary giftedness and artistic taste of the Ukrainian people. There is already a whole literature in existence concerning Ukrainian "pysanki."

We are only able to touch superficially upon the vast field or artistic relics that we have inherited from the Ukrainian people and their artistic activity. The general conclusion, which we feel ourselves justified in making now we have surveyed that field, is this: the peasant art of the Ukraine is closely bound up with the peasant art of the centre and north of Western Europe. We meet invariably with a love of, and gravitation to, the floral forms of ornament. The variety and perfection reached by the Ukrainian people in the application of these forms give us the right to consider that bond more close than, for instance, is the case with the Muscovite people, who show in their peasant art a decisive preference for the geometric forms.

The love of ornament and beauty that manifests itself intensely in every sphere of life, that permeates that life, is one of the characteristic features of the Ukrainian people. The past life of this people, that made for preservation and continuity of the moral individuality of the masses, resulted in the creation of a national art that reached in its manifestations the high levels of perfection. The present conditions of life in the Ukraine have interrupted this continuity, and have dulled the inborn artistic instinct of the Ukrainian. This is an indisputable fact. As the result we see here, as in other European countries, the general decline of the true peasant art, and the substituting for it of factory-made ugliness.

(*Translated by* V. STEPANKOWSKY)



CUT PAPER DESIGN

322 PEASANT FAMILY FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

323 PREPARING THE HEMP IN KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

324 HARVESTING IN VOLHYNIA, NORTH UKRAINE

325 GROUP OF PEASANTS FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

326 PEASANT GIRL CLEANING FISH

327 AN ALFRESCO MEAL IN KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

328 PEASANT GIRLS FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

329 PEASANT'S SUMMER COSTUME FROM VOLHYNIA, NORTH UKRAINE

330 PREPARING THE HEMP IN KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

331 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

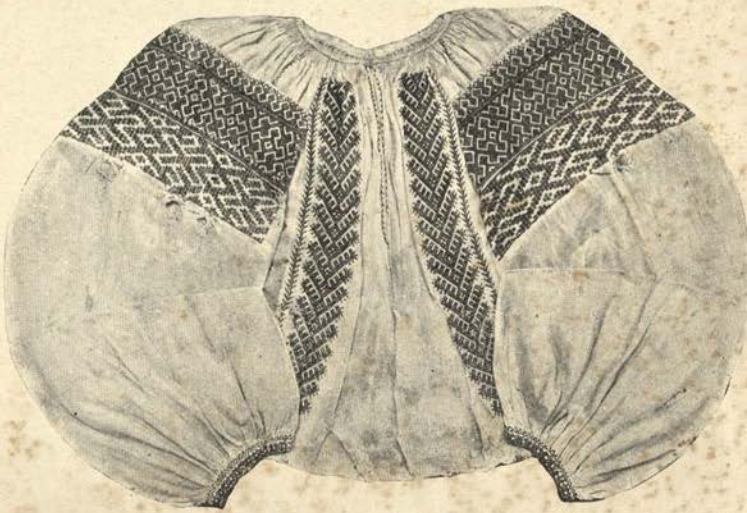
332 PEASANT'S FESTIVAL COSTUME FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

333 PEASANT GIRL FROM SOUTH UKRAINE

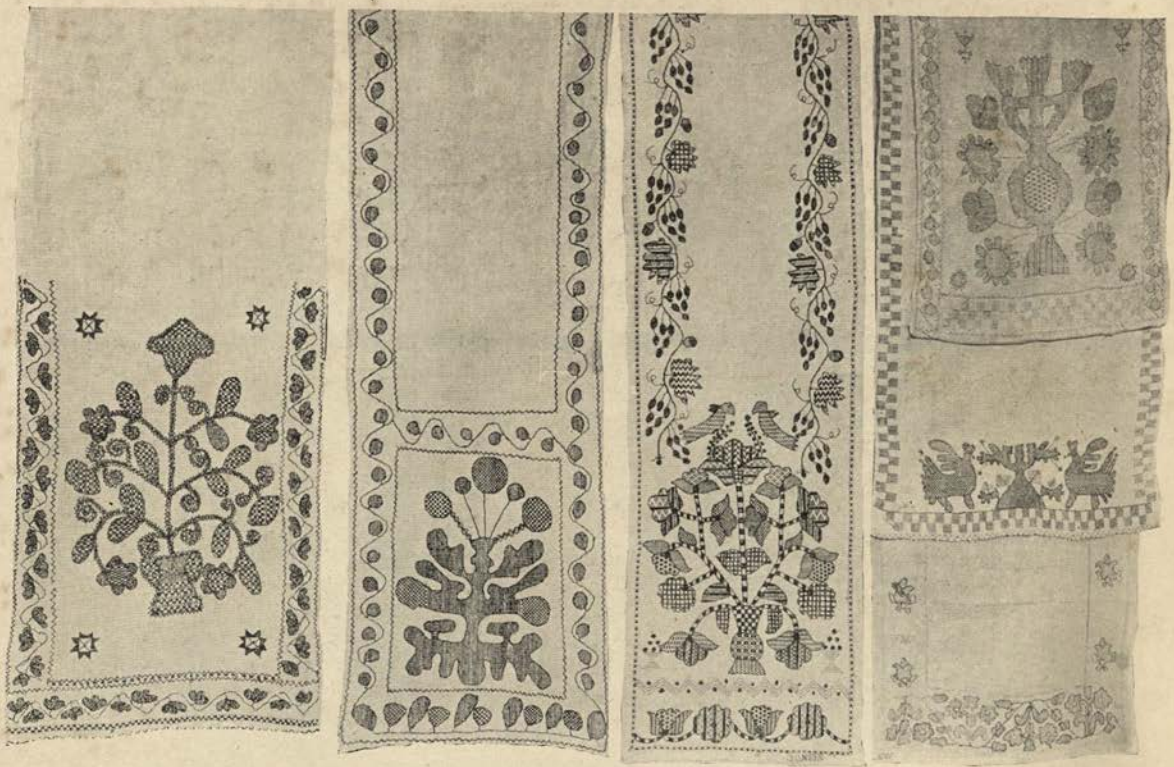
334 PEASANT COSTUME FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

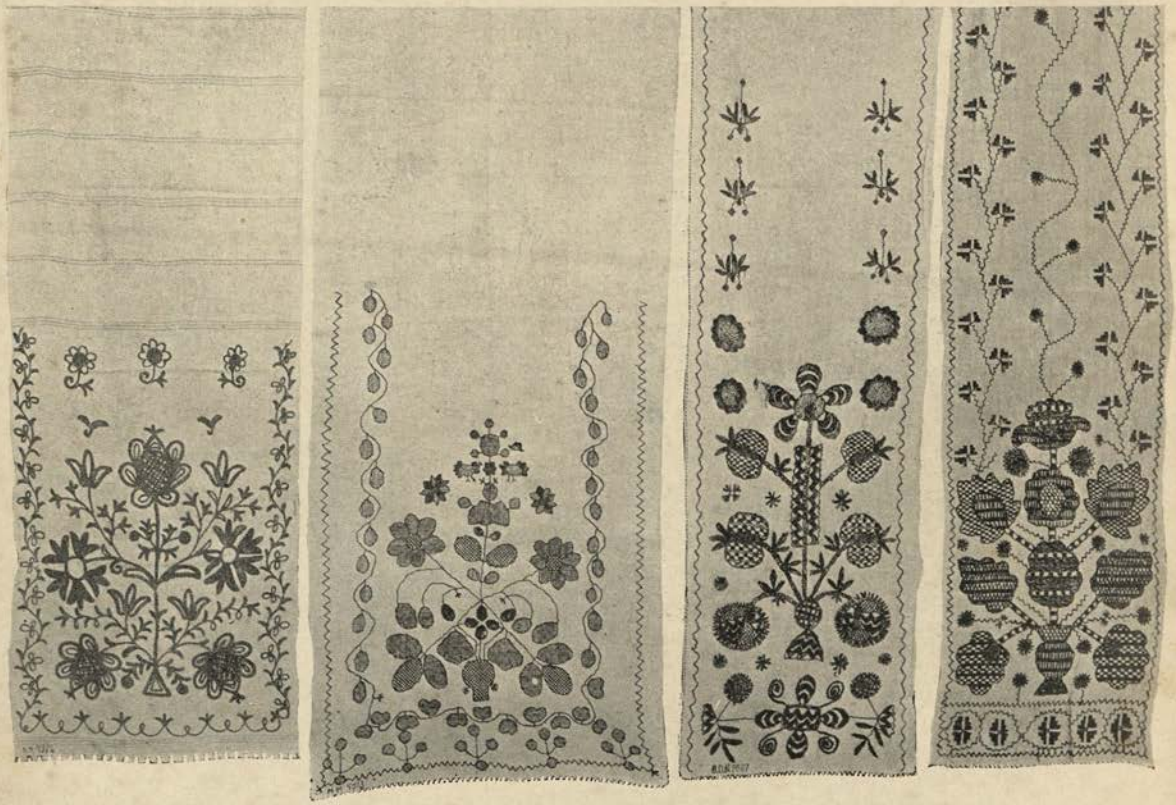
335 PEASANTS' WINTER COSTUMES FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

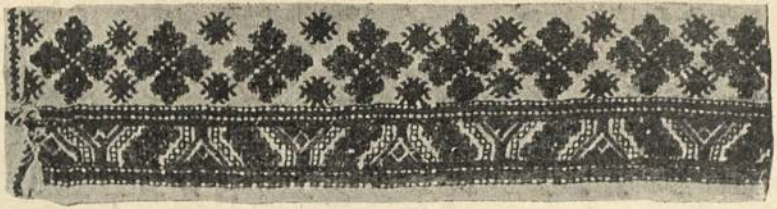
336 AND 337 PEASANTS' WINTER COSTUMES FROM KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

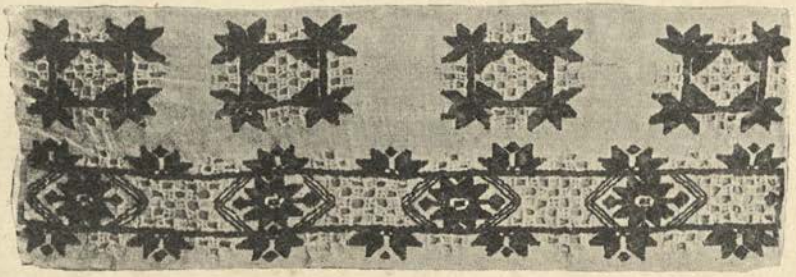


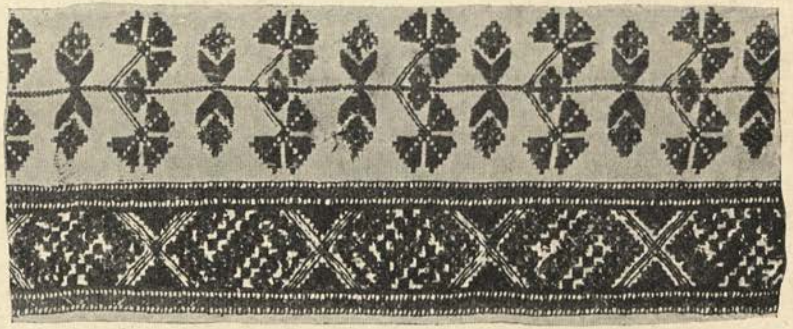
341 TO 344 WOMEN'S EMBROIDERED BLOUSES, FROM SOUTH UKRAINE

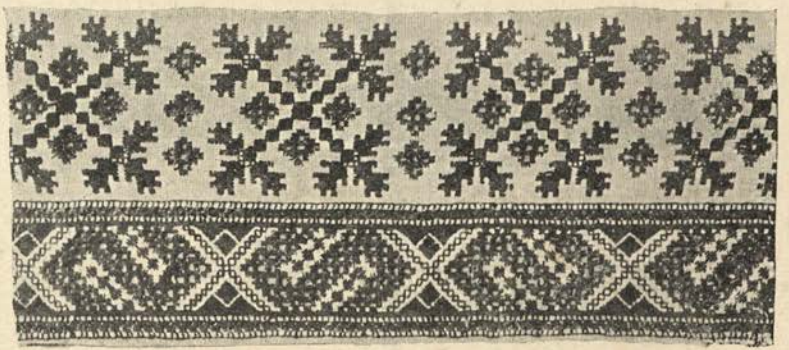




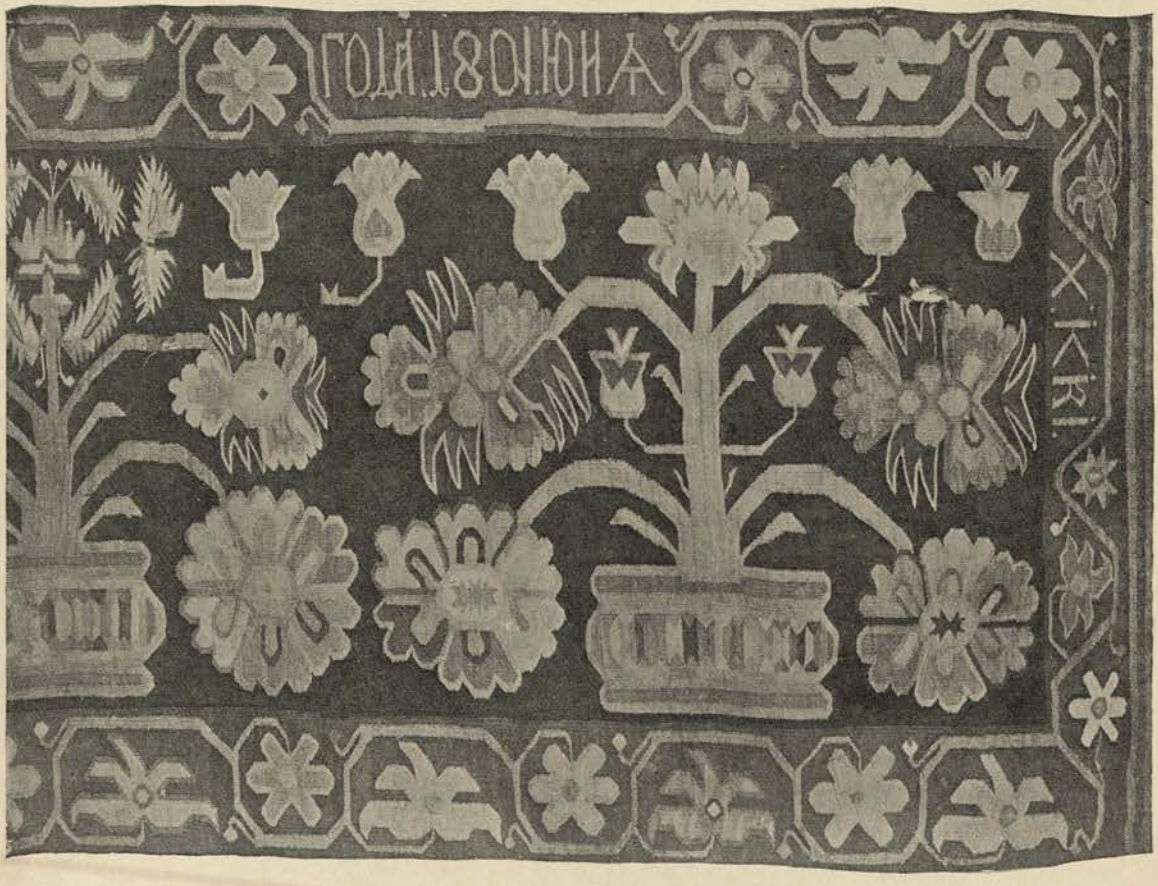








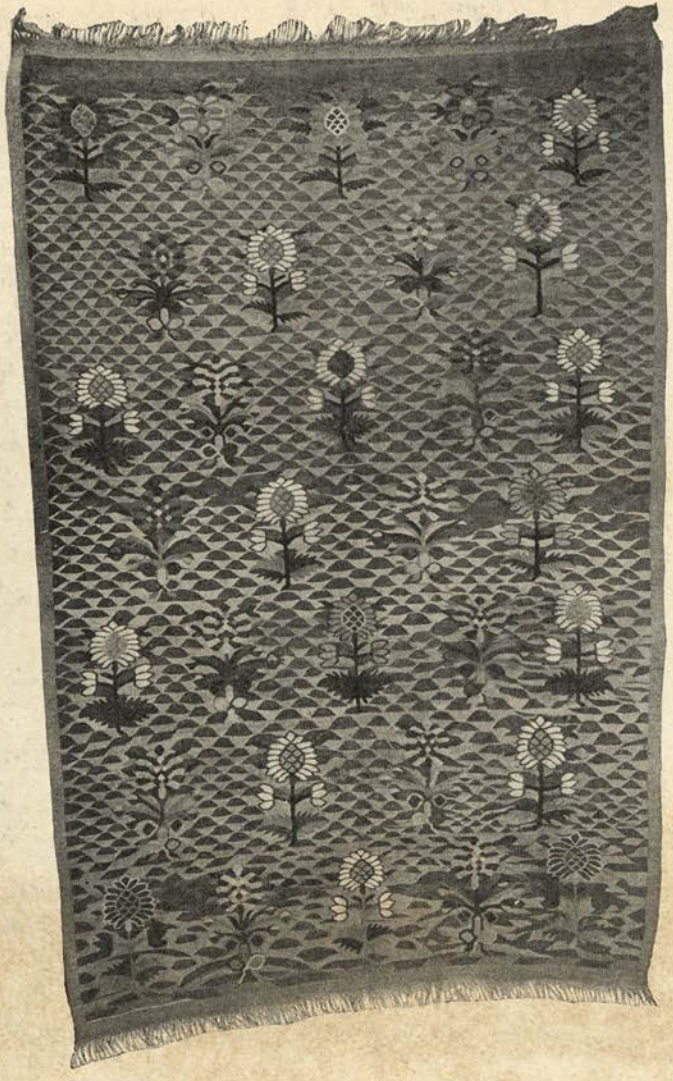
353 TO 359 EMBROIDERY FOR WOMEN'S BLOUSES, FROM SOUTH UKRAINE



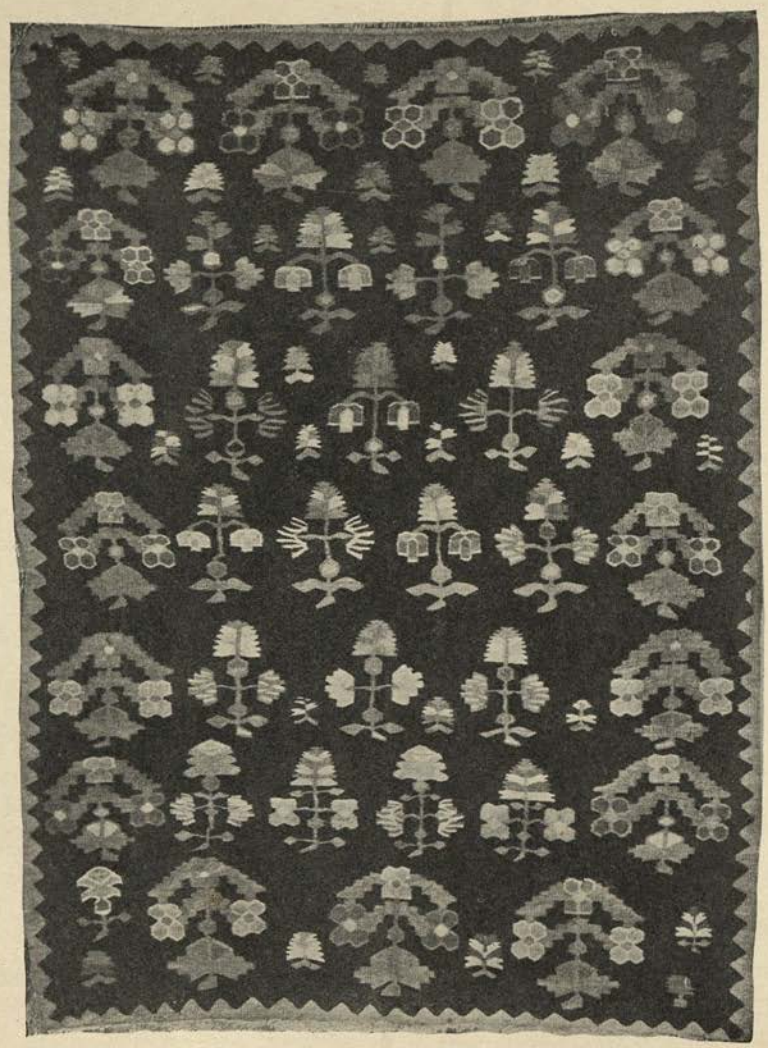
360 AND 361 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES

362 AND 363 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES

364 AND 365 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES



366 AND 367 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES



368 AND 369 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES

370 TO 372 HAND-WOVEN MATERIAL USED FOR SKIRTS

373 AND 374 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES

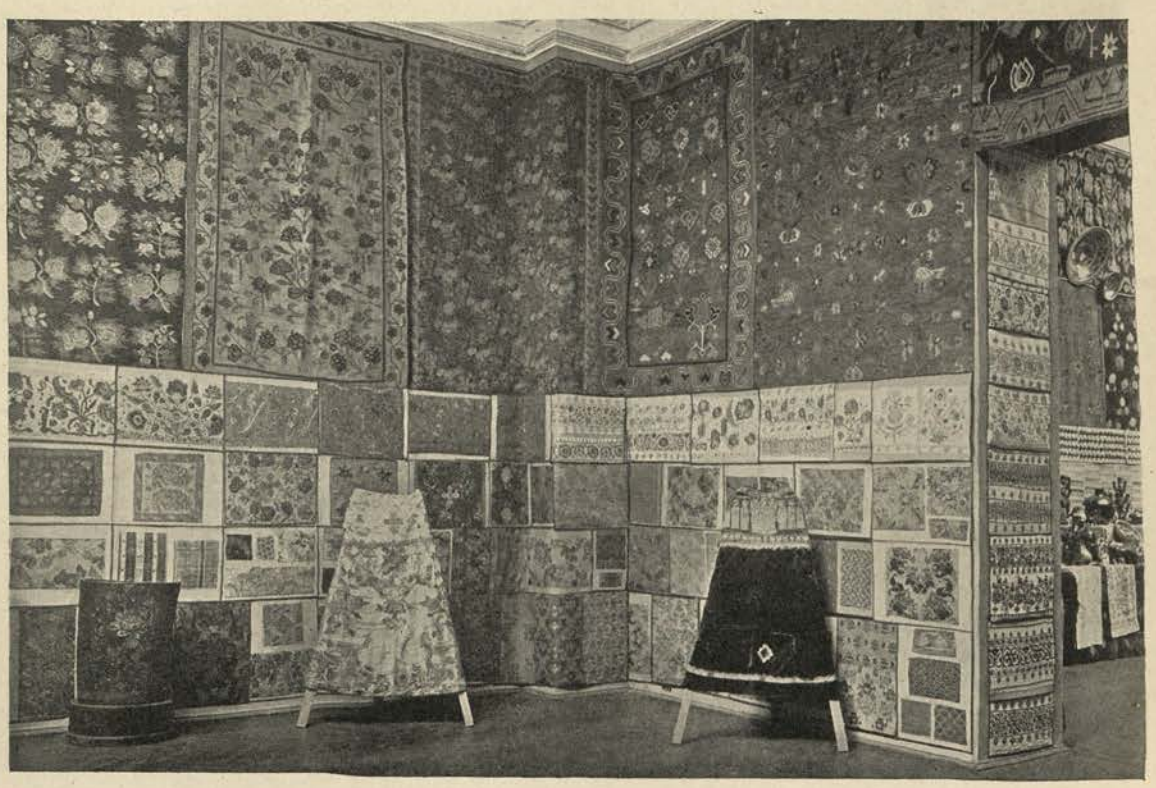
375 AND 376 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES

377 AND 378 WOOLLEN TAPESTRIES

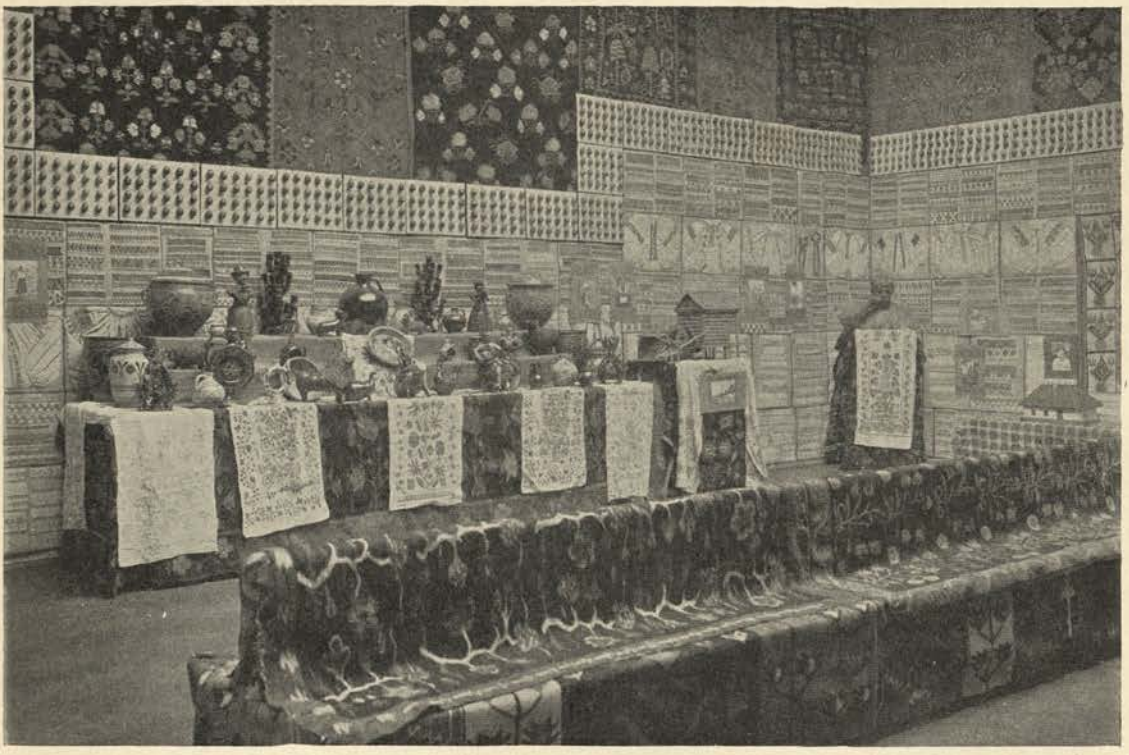
379 AND 380 INTERIOR OF THE VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM AT KIEFF

381 INTERIOR OF THE VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM AT KIEFF

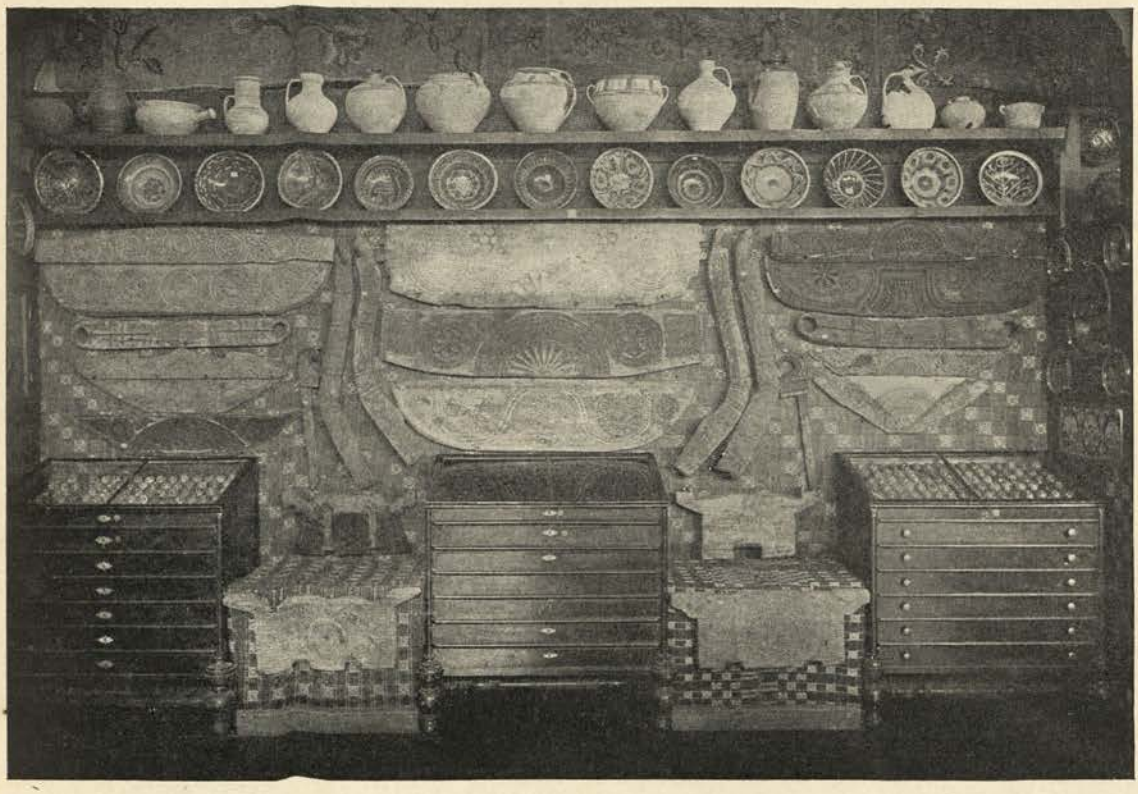
382 INTERIOR OF THE VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM AT KIEFF



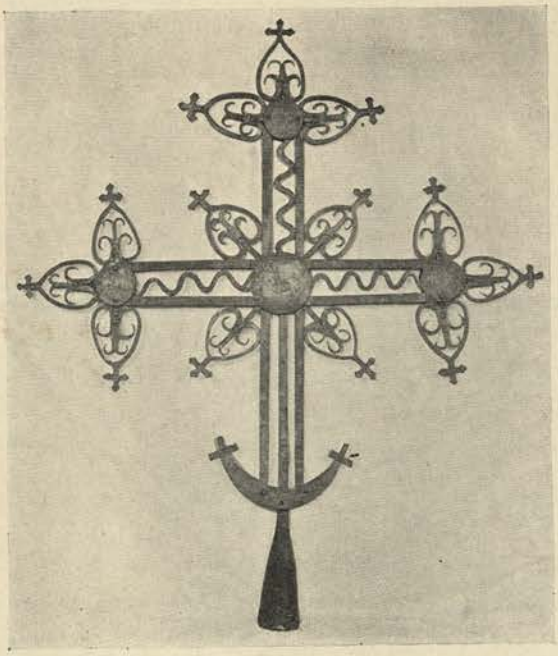
383 INTERIOR OF THE VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM AT KIEFF

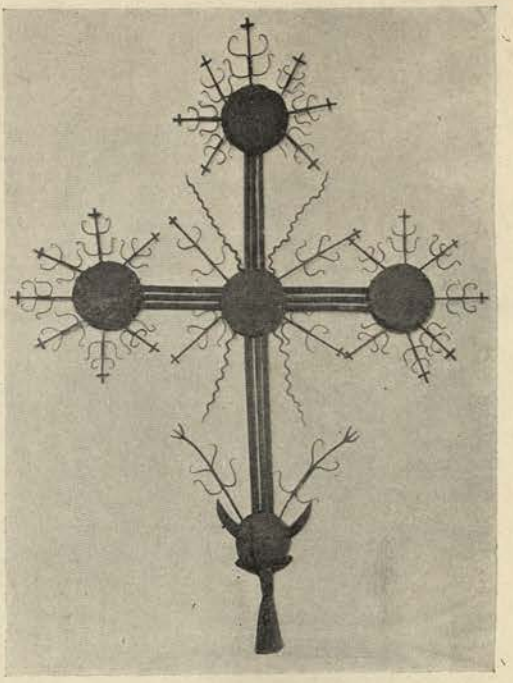


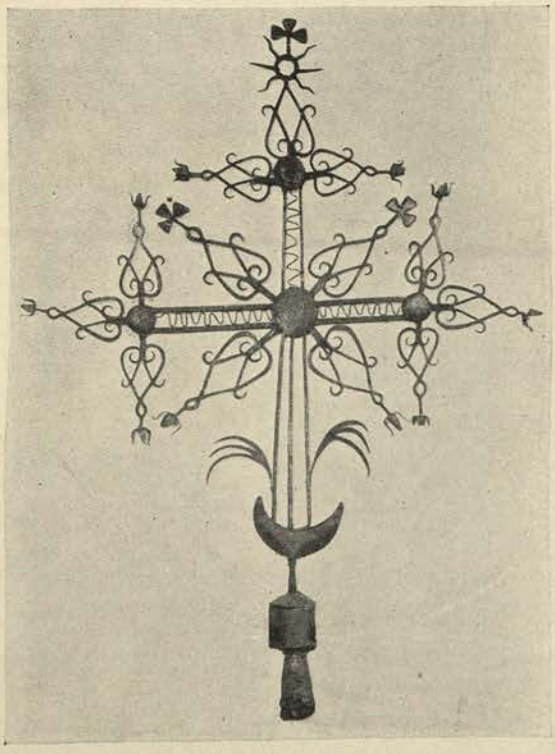
384 INTERIOR OF THE VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM AT KIEFF

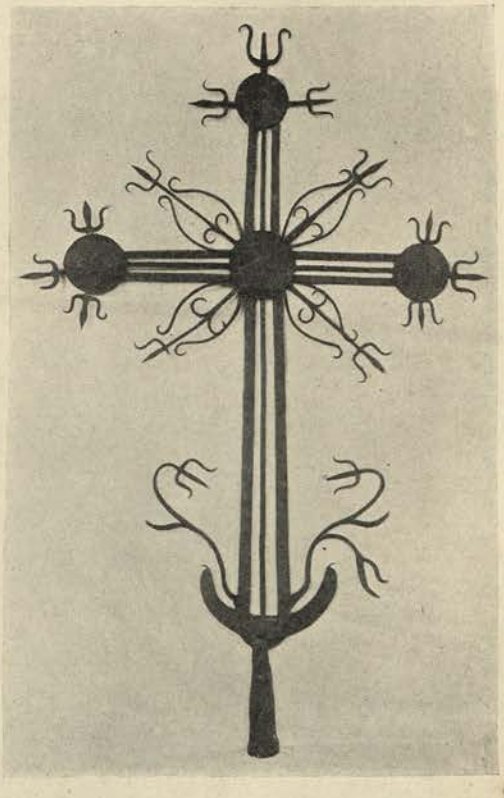


385 INTERIOR OF THE VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM AT POLTAVA

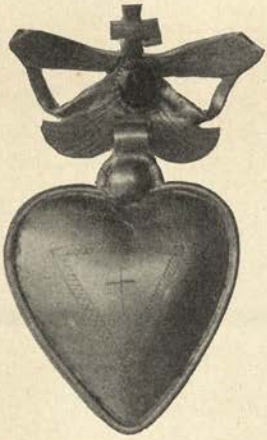


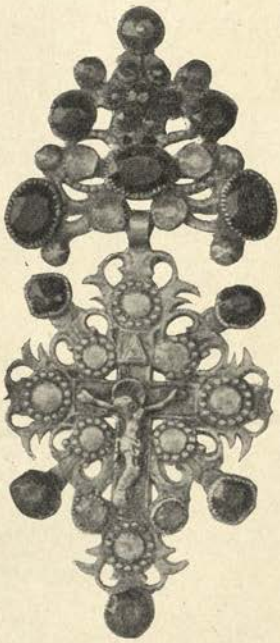




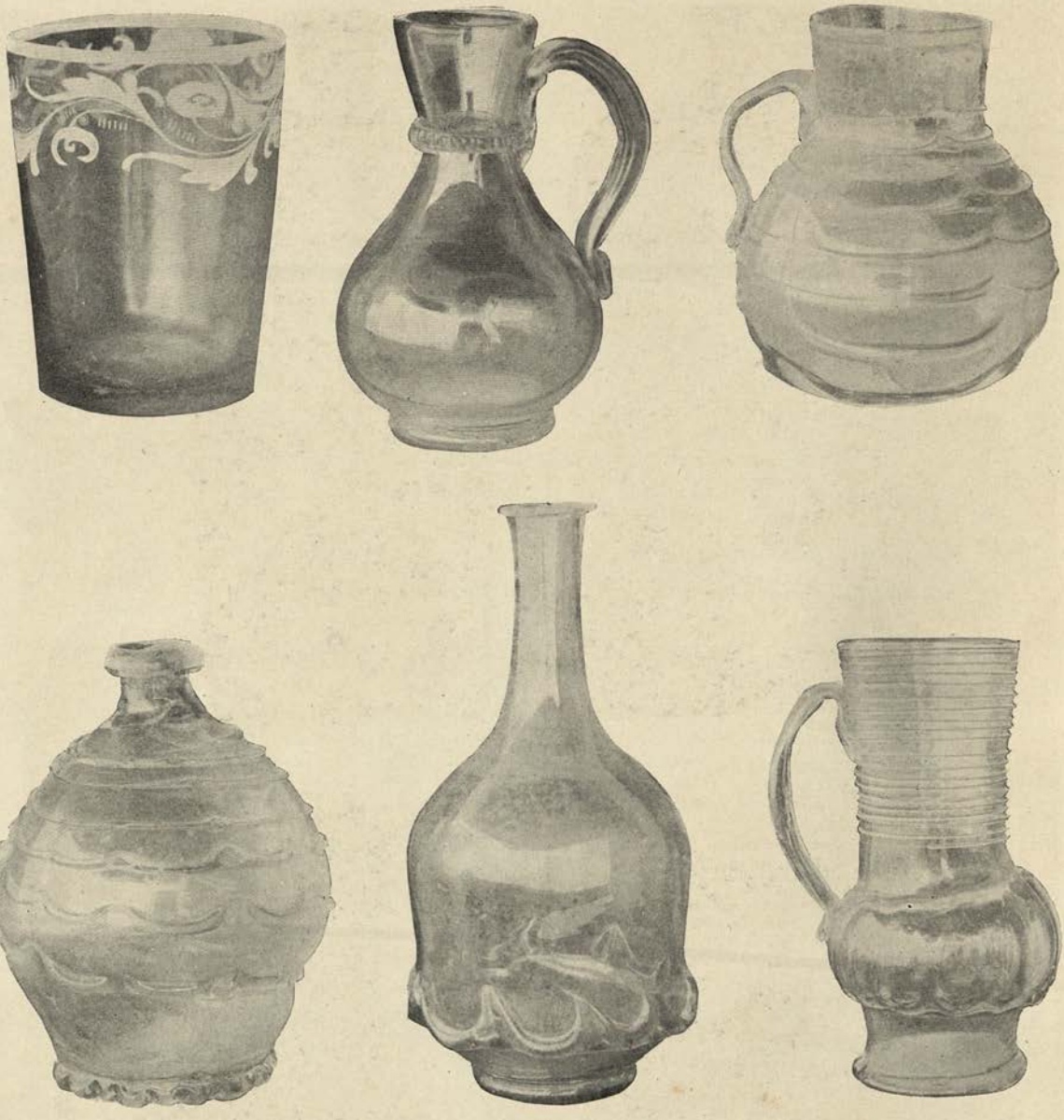


386 TO 389 IRON CHURCH-CROSSES (VIIITH CENTURY)





390 TO 397 SILVER JEWELLERY



398 TO 403 GLASS JUGS, BOTTLES, AND TUMBLERS

404 TO 407 GLASS BOTTLES AND JUGS

408 GROUP OF GLASSWARE

409 GROUP OF POTTERY FROM POLTAVA

FROM A PAINTING BY BASILE KRITCHEVSKY

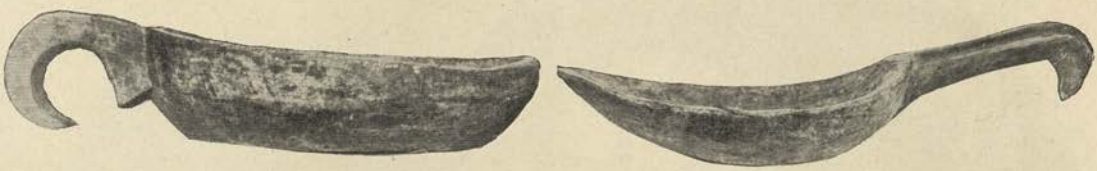
410 EARTHENWARE STOVE-TILES (XVIIIth CENTURY)

411 to 416 EARTHENWARE PLATES

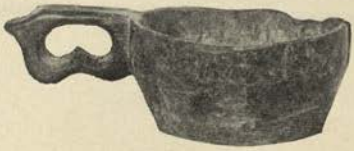
417 to 422 EARTHENWARE JARS, FLASKS, AND BOWLS

423 TO 428 EARTHENWARE PLATES

429 TO 434 EARTHENWARE JUGS AND STOVE-TILES



435 AND 436 WOODEN SCOOPS



437 WOODEN SCOOP

438 WOODEN SPOON

439 CARVED WOODEN BOWL

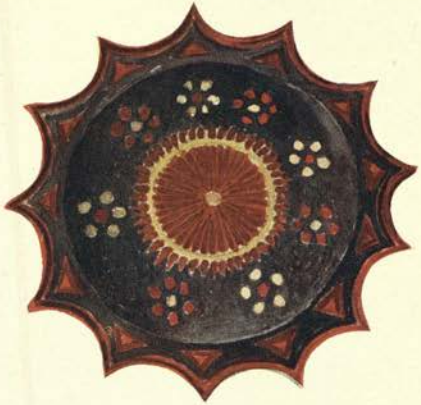
440 WOODEN SCOOP

441 WOODEN DISH

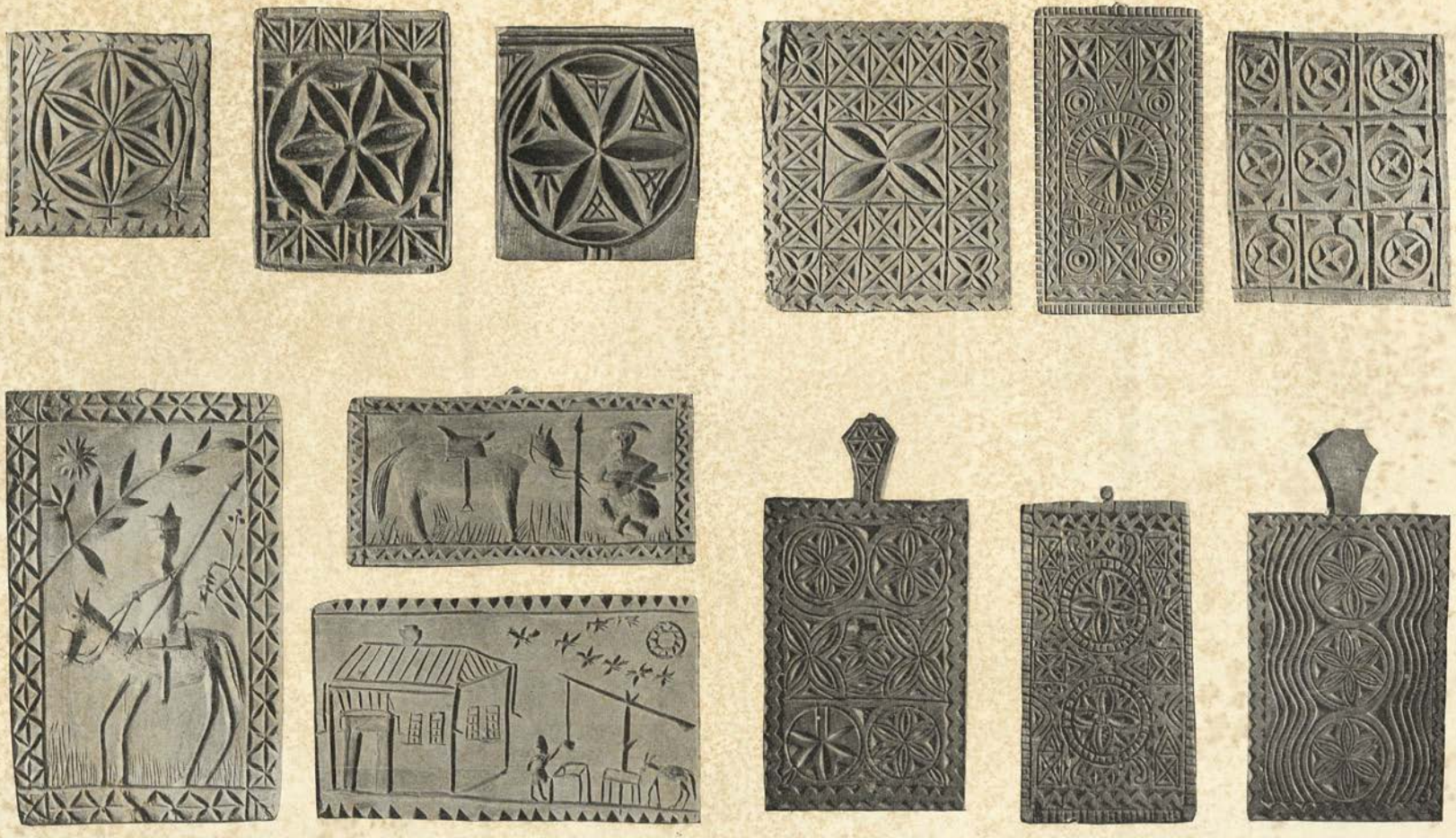
442 CARVED WOODEN COFFER

443 CARVED WOODEN JUG

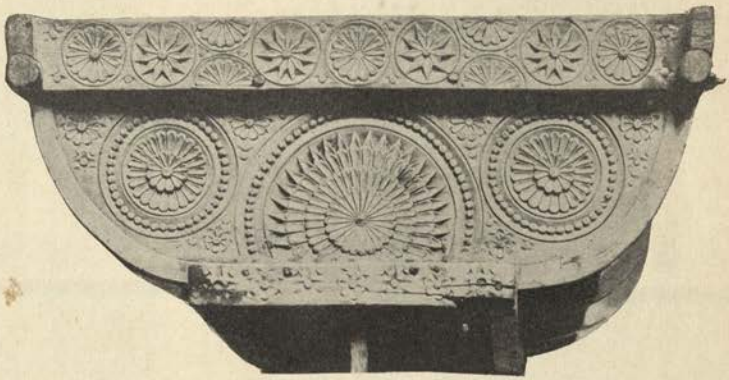
444 TO 446 EARTHENWARE PLATES AND BOTTLE



447 TO 449 PAINTED WOODEN PLATES

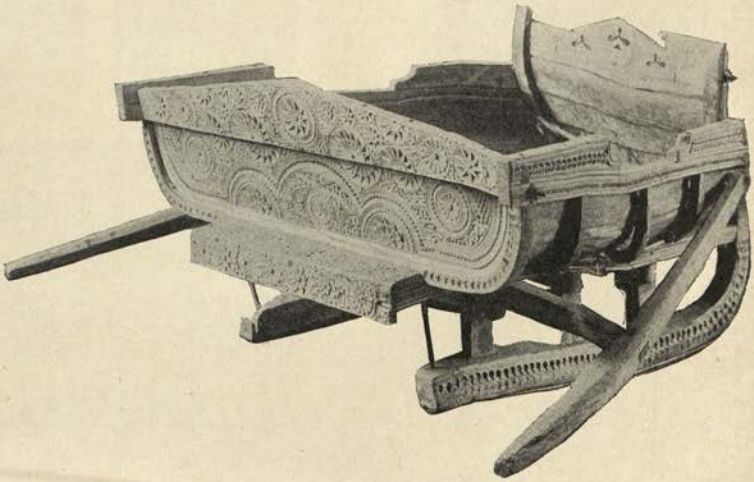


450 TO 461 CARVED WOODEN GINGERBREAD-MOULDS



462 PORTION OF CARVED WOODEN CARRIAGE

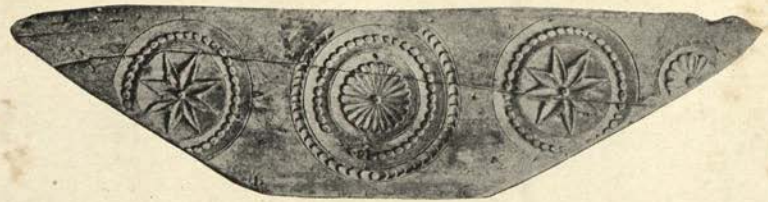
463 WOODEN TABLE (XVIIITH CENTURY)

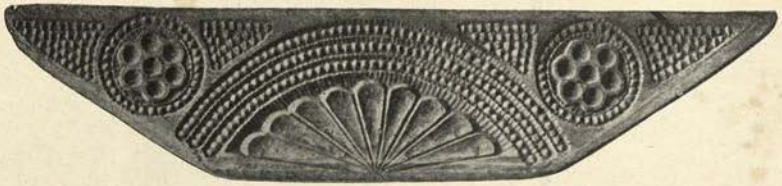


464 CARVED WOODEN SLEDGE

465 CHURCH WITH NINE CUPOLAS

FROM A PAINTING BY S. WASILKOVSKY





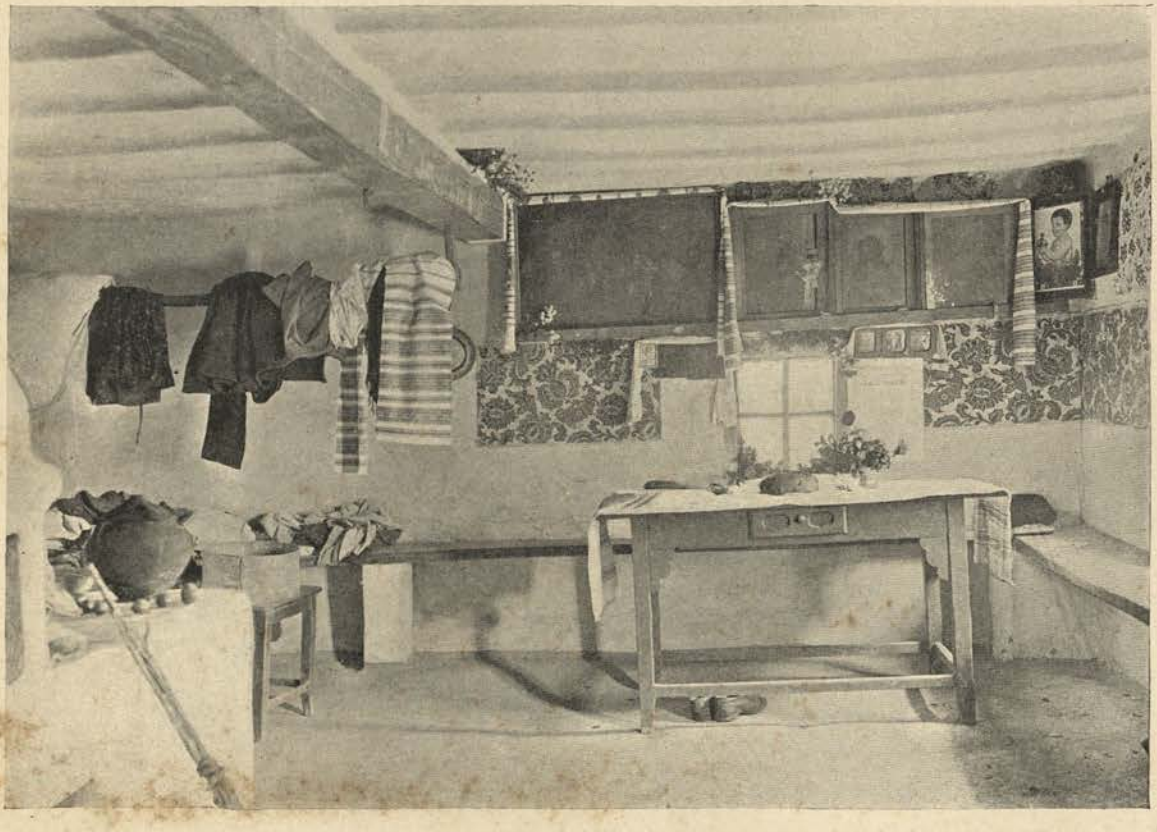
466 to 471 CARVED WOODEN PARTS OF CARRIAGES AND SLEDGES

472 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE

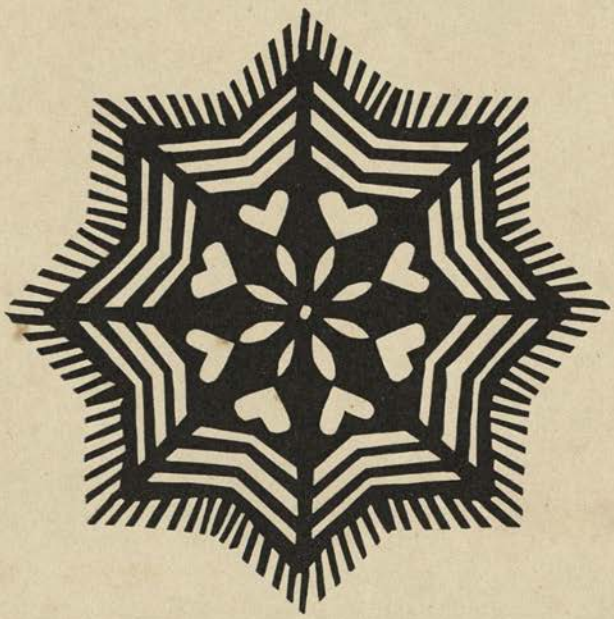
473 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN SIEDLCE, NORTH-WEST UKRAINE

474 INTERIOR OF A PEASANT'S HOUSE IN POLTAVA

FROM A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING BY BASILE KRITCHEVSKY



475 AND 476 INTERIORS OF PEASANTS' HOUSES IN KIEFF, SOUTH UKRAINE



477 CUT PAPER DESIGN

RUSSIAN POLAND

THE PEASANT ART OF RUSSIAN POLAND. By Maryan Wawrzeniecki.

THE archæological remains obtained by excavation in the lands that subsequently formed Poland testify to the various influences which were formerly predominant in these regions. So far as the present state of scientific investigation permits, it is asserted that these influences came from the north, the south, the east, and the west. It is to this day a disputed question whether Slavs constituted the primitive inhabitants of these lands. The only definite historical fact is that the so-called epoch of the "Burgwalltypus" ("vitrified forts") is closely associated with the Slavs. The Slavs of the pre-historic ages (as T. Peisker has proved in his work, *Die älteren Beziehungen der Slawen zu Turkotartaren und Germanen und ihre sozialgeschichtliche Bedeutung*, inhabited these lands in dependence on their neighbours. In the east they were oppressed by the Turko-Tartar tribes, in the west and north by the Germans. The rise of the Slavonic states was combined with an internal revolution, a popular movement aiming at emancipation from foreign oppression. The masses of Slavs, stirred to revolt, placed on the throne individuals from among themselves. These individuals, thanks to hired mercenary retinues ("Druzina" or "Comitatus"), gradually gained power and imposed their will on their opponents.

Slowly kings appeared, and from the "retinue" of warriors a nobility ("szlachta") was evolved. The land began to be apportioned by the king in possession to the most notable members of his court. In consequence then of the settlement on the land of these Slavonic inhabitants we get an outline of the first struggle between the old and the new landowners. The history of the first centuries of historical Poland, already a Christian country, contains scanty but sufficient information as to peasant revolutions. They have been represented by monkish chroniclers as reprehensible attempts at a Pagan reaction: but they are associated too with a protest against the social changes that tended towards the mediæval caste-system. Gradually the position of the nobility and the knights became so strong and grew to such power that the Polish kings fell into dependence on this Order, and in 1422 they published at Czerwinsk a "Privilege" radically undermining the freedom of the peasant class. The dependence of the peasant on his "lord" became, as throughout all Europe, an accomplished fact, in a greater or less degree according to the will or personal character of the landlord; and, despite the humanitarian edict of Kosciuszko (issued on May 7, 1794, at Polaniec), despite the examples of self-denial and

nobility set by those gentlemen who of their own free will released the peasants on their estates from all burdens and "corvées," this dependence continued more or less until the year 1864.

The "Congress Kingdom" of Poland, which produced the peasant decorative art represented in our illustrations, comprises the piece of land that was artificially carved out by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. It is a country without natural boundaries, the eastern parts having the character of the Ruthenian country, the west of Prussian Masovia, the south of the Vistula plain and the Cracow district, and the north of the neighbouring Lithuanian regions. This accessibility and accidental, purely political isolation of the regions from whence our materials are derived, excludes any fundamental originality in comparison with the neighbouring Polish lands in Austria and Prussia. Together with the other lands of ancient historical Poland, the regions of the Congress Kingdom have passed through various changes and evolutions. As far back as the remote Middle Ages German colonisation in the villages, and more especially in the towns, brought hither foreign—*i.e.* German—influences. Incessant wars, which covered almost the whole history of mediæval Poland, wars that were principally successful, introduced among the local peasant population an immigratory alien element composed of prisoners of war. This element included Germans, Ruthenians, sometimes Turks and Tartars. The plundering raids of Lithuanians and Jadzwings, Tartars and Hungarians also produced a great admixture of nationalities. The maintenance of bands and militia, often recruited from foreign sources (Hungarians, Wallachs or Scotchmen), by the magnates of the castles, even by the gentry, further increased the foreign element and introduced alien dress and manners. In the age of Sigismund I a strong Italian influence spread over the country. Even to-day the ornamental embroidery on the peasant's coat is called "fior."

In more recent periods, when the Napoleonic wars took the Polish peasants to Italy, Spain and Moscow, the returning soldiers brought back with them to their homes impressions of the foreign productions they had seen. But one is sensible of little of this alien influence in the examples of the peasant art we have collected here. And for this there are several reasons. In the first place, I may draw attention to the principal characteristics, building materials—wood and straw, the irregular concentration of homesteads with their straw roofs in close contact, and hence frequent conflagrations, resulting in the complete destruction of whole villages, with all the houses and tools. The people, their life and customs, have only lately attracted the attention of occasional investigators. We have

begun to make amateur collections of their traditions, folksongs and dialects. Our ideas on the subject were such that if any one reflected on popular art, as did Joseph Ignatius Kraszewski ("The Art of the Slavs," Vilna, 1860), it was such a strange phenomenon that it did not find an echo till the appearance in 1903 of Casimir Moklowski's "Peasant Art." Gradually more scientific collectors came forward, and of these the most prominent was Oscar Kolberg, and later Sigismund Gloger and the learned Dr. Jan Karlowicz, who finally instituted the scientific investigation of the Polish peasants. And not till 1910 did the erudite Professor Stanislas Ciszewski occupy the chair of Ethnography at the University of Lemberg (Lwów). All these were the efforts of private, public-spirited individuals, for we have no governmental assistance in this direction. The Museum of Agriculture and Industry, to which we owe the greater part of the collected material, is an institution maintained purely by the joint efforts of private individuals. The "Society for the Investigation of the Country" is also a private institution. And this results in our being able to show only unequal and incomplete material. Such a work is beyond the ability and means of private persons. We must also continually take into consideration the remarkable fact that the peasant has for nearly forty years regarded the educated man with disfavour; every kind of scientific investigation he considers as dangerous to himself. He nourishes a superstitious prejudice towards actions that are incomprehensible to his understanding. There are districts in Poland (*e.g.* Ojcow) where the very word "book" creates a panic among the peasantry. Add to this the great distances to railways and highroads, and the lack of convenient centres for the investigator, and we get some idea of the difficulties that have beset the scientist throughout the whole Congress Kingdom of Poland.

The cottage and the dress, these contain all the achievements of peasant ornamentation. The cottages are principally built of wood and thatched with straw—in districts rich in timber built on the "corner-post" or "zamek" (beams laid one on the other and projecting at the corners) systems, in poorer districts on the cheaper "rygiel" ("bolt") method. In the contours of the peasant's cottage are reflected the influences of styles that once predominated all over Poland. The decorativeness of the cottage of the Polish peasant lies in the beauty of the general outline, in the straw thatching, in the painting of the outside walls, in the beautiful joining of the corners, in the extension in profile beyond the corners of the beams of the wall (the "rysie" of the cottages in Nieborow), and in the lines of the wooden posts supporting the veranda or porch. If the

cottage is old, if time has laid her hand on it, then the picturesqueness is displayed in the harmony of the colouring, constituting a beautiful, multi-coloured splash in the landscape. The beauty of its interior lies in the "pajonki" (*i.e.* "spiders," designs made of straw) and "wycinanki" (cut-out designs of coloured paper), probably once associated with a superstitious belief in "bewitchment" and the "evil eye," that has now disappeared in some districts, but in others still continues as a decorative motive. The many-coloured chests, the woollen covers, the beautiful bed-covers, the benches and tables, together with the cupboards, the dishes and salt-cellars, and the basins for holy water by the door, these are all objects adorned with a carved or painted design. But their claim to artistic importance will always lie not in the form but in the decoration and colour. The excellence of external form, the beauty of cardinal lines do not constitute the æsthetic value of peasant productions. The harmony and even the discordancy of colouring, these are the true tokens of peasant art.

Completely identical are the characteristics that predominate in the peasant costumes, which also bear the disappearing features of styles that once held sway in Poland. In southern provinces, such as Kielce, this dress, in its conformity to certain patterns (flowers on the materials for corsets, shirts, shawls and aprons), has preserved all the features of "barocco." Many hold the view that dress and its ornaments were not always created by the peasantry itself (for instance, the black crosses on the coats of the Miechow peasants recall the dependence of these peasants on the monks of Miechow, priests of the Holy Sepulchre, *i.e.* Crusaders). We may infer that in other districts, too, the will of the lord of the manor left its mark here also. This dress, poor enough in its general outlines, has often beautiful details, such as appliqué-work, embroidery, and always very pretty colouring. The dress is completed by a cap or hat, a belt and boots. The caps have great variety and some external beauty. The belts are often very richly adorned, and are always interesting from their decorative motifs and colour schemes.

The women wear very gay costumes. The general lines of female dress are less happy, for important changes were introduced here by the influence of the clergy scenting in everything sin and temptation. The colouring and beauty of the embroideries and the designs constitute the leading characteristics and qualities of female dress, which strikes one by its relatively slight adaptation to the climatic conditions of the Kingdom of Poland. To-day radical changes are beginning to take place in this direction.

With dress is closely associated weaving and embroidery.

Weaving has survived chiefly in the northern and western parts of the country. The southerners have for sixty years ceased to produce woven articles. The Lowicz, the Opoczynski districts, together with Podlasie and the Kurpian country (*i.e.* the region of great forests) are the chief strongholds of weaving. Here very ancient motifs often appear, but we must confess that our people have a childlike susceptibility and gladly adopt what they have seen elsewhere and what has taken their fancy; hence they sometimes abandon their own traditional decorative designs and introduce others which please by their modernity. With weaving are connected such implements as the spindle, the distaff, the bobbin, and, in some places, the spinning-wheel, often in their form and ornamentation revealing very interesting traditions. Here we must mention the weaver's frame, which still survives as a relic of remote antiquity, and often contains its own peculiar decorative work executed in wood. The very primitive batlet, used in connection with the washing of woven tissues, is also a subject for ornamentation.

Objects of every-day use, such as pokers for stirring the fire, also the tinder-boxes forged by peasant smiths, all bear ornamental decoration, and their types justify us in assigning them to the very early archæological periods in the history of these lands.

The surroundings of the cottage, *i.e.* fences and railings, also show a right conception of the beautiful. The posts of the fences are sometimes carved into distinct shapes, while the larger stakes of the railings are similarly treated. The enclosed fences in some districts have designs not altogether lacking in traditional art and charm.

By the highways, at the crossroads, stand so-called "figures," or roadside crosses. These figures in different parts of the Congress Kingdom are of various dimensions and sometimes possess an individuality of their own. In the southern districts they are frequently quadrilateral posts, with niches for figures or small pictures. On the top of such a post is placed the form of the suffering Jesus, usually the work of some small town or village carver. It is a typical example of peasant sculpture, where often the chisel takes the place of the knife, and the technicalities of wood-carving are transferred to stone. Wooden crosses are also found supporting the outstretched figure of Christ. These are smaller towards the south, taller in the north, and enormous in Lithuania. Besides crosses and brick-supported posts the peasants are always willing to pay for so-called "little chapels." Such chapels are a survival of the "coffer" altars, common in the Gothic and

Renaissance times. The sides, or wings, were taken away, and only the centre remained. A small gallery, a roof and a cross were added, and we have ready a fetish to which the peasants attach great importance and attribute wonderful powers. Here and there beside the roads or before the village churches we come upon figures of saints, fashioned by the chisel of some self-educated village artist. These examples of sculpture, which Professor W. Luszczkiewicz has classed as peasant art, in the imperfection of the proportions and the hang of the drapery, recall the barbaric productions of Roman art. I have never been able to feel any trace of Gothic traditions in these figures. The great crosses of forged iron placed on the wooden posts in the chapels, or on the posts of stone or brick, are chiefly the handiwork of a peasant smith dwelling in the village. In the work of these smiths we can generally find much art and skill, and it is full of character.

A conception of beauty is revealed in the iron-work of the carts, especially in the south of the country. The ends of the shafts, the so-called "little dogs," and the foreparts of the cart called "frontings," are covered by the smiths with iron-work which they adorn with designs of the crescent, cross, wheel, and sometimes eye (*cf.* "Ziemia," journal of the Society for the Investigation of the Country, 1910–1911).

The locks of the cottage doors and of the coffers, together with the padlocks and keys, are also beautiful in the form of a heart, clover, or some other decoration, always interesting. Of this branch of art, however, we have at present but small material collected.

The fishing-tackle, although far from ornamental, has, however, in the general outlines of its form much charm associated with its utility. The harness, too, though greatly modernised, yet retains sometimes marks of beauty.

We consider that popular ornamentation has been preserved in its most typical and unaltered form in the customary ceremonial survivals—*i.e.* in painted and decorated "Easter-eggs" with their ornamental colouring (red, blue and white) and their designs (svastika, small tree, spiral, wheel, triangle, cross); in the ceremonial cakes ("placki") or wedding cakes ("kolacze"), "korowaje," "osutki," "orzeszki" and "szczodraki," and various other kinds of cakes; in such symbolical objects of superstitious ritual as the wand of the wedding "starosta" or "elder" (symbol of Phallus), the wreaths and crowns of the wedding festivities and of the "harvest home"; in the "gaiki" (celebrations connected with the change of the seasons) or the solstice; also in the cut paper designs and

"spiders" which we have already mentioned in connection with the cottage interior.

In the above-mentioned objects, in our opinion, certain ancient superstitious traditions have been preserved. The colouring and artistic designs of the ceremonial "Easter eggs"—which, by the way, are under the ban of the Church—intended to be divided and eaten in the days connected with the worship of the "new sun," and the contents of which afford a symbol of fertility and fresh life (the renewal of nature), seem to have as their purpose the protection of all from the impure negative powers (enchantment) of these very elements. The colours of the eggs and their decorative designs were considered in distant ages as effectual means of neutralising these powers.

Easter eggs thus decorated (*i.e.* protected or secured against evil) often form gifts for friends or lovers (the village maidens give them to the farmhands) accompanied by wishes for prosperity (vitality). The same motifs, inherited from the superstitious faith of remote antiquity, constitute the decoration of the "crowns" at the wedding and the harvest home, also of the ceremonial wedding cakes. Besides the usual decorative designs emphasising the actual ceremony (the spiral, cross, wand), we find concealed in these ornaments an ancient motif which is supposed to hallow those cakes apportioned among all who partake in the ceremony. In the category of ancient symbols we must include the wand of the elders ("starosta") of the wedding: these wands play an important rôle and are indispensable to a marriage contract. The execution of the work on these "wands" and "crowns," apart from tradition, is a good criterion of the level of æsthetic feeling among the peasantry of any given district.

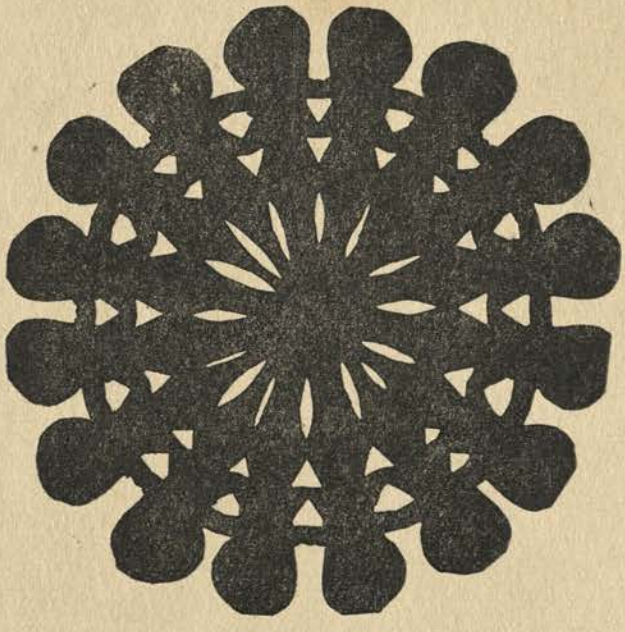
In some of the popular superstitious ceremonies connected with the solstice, such as the "gwiazda" (star), "gaik" (grove), the "turon," the decorative instinct of the people also reveals itself. The ribbons used in the decoration of some of the objects, although at present largely displaced by factory-made articles, none the less bear designs that satisfy the artistic tastes of the peasants.

In summarising the nature of all the materials we have been able to collect, we must emphasise the fact that throughout the whole region of the Congress Kingdom one continually feels the connection of these lands, from the earliest times, with the great home of culture of the peoples of Mid-Europe. It is the influence of Western currents of thought, sometimes caricatured and adapted, but distinctly felt at every step, that constitutes our separate position in these lands. Here are but scanty relics of Lithuanian (Scandi-

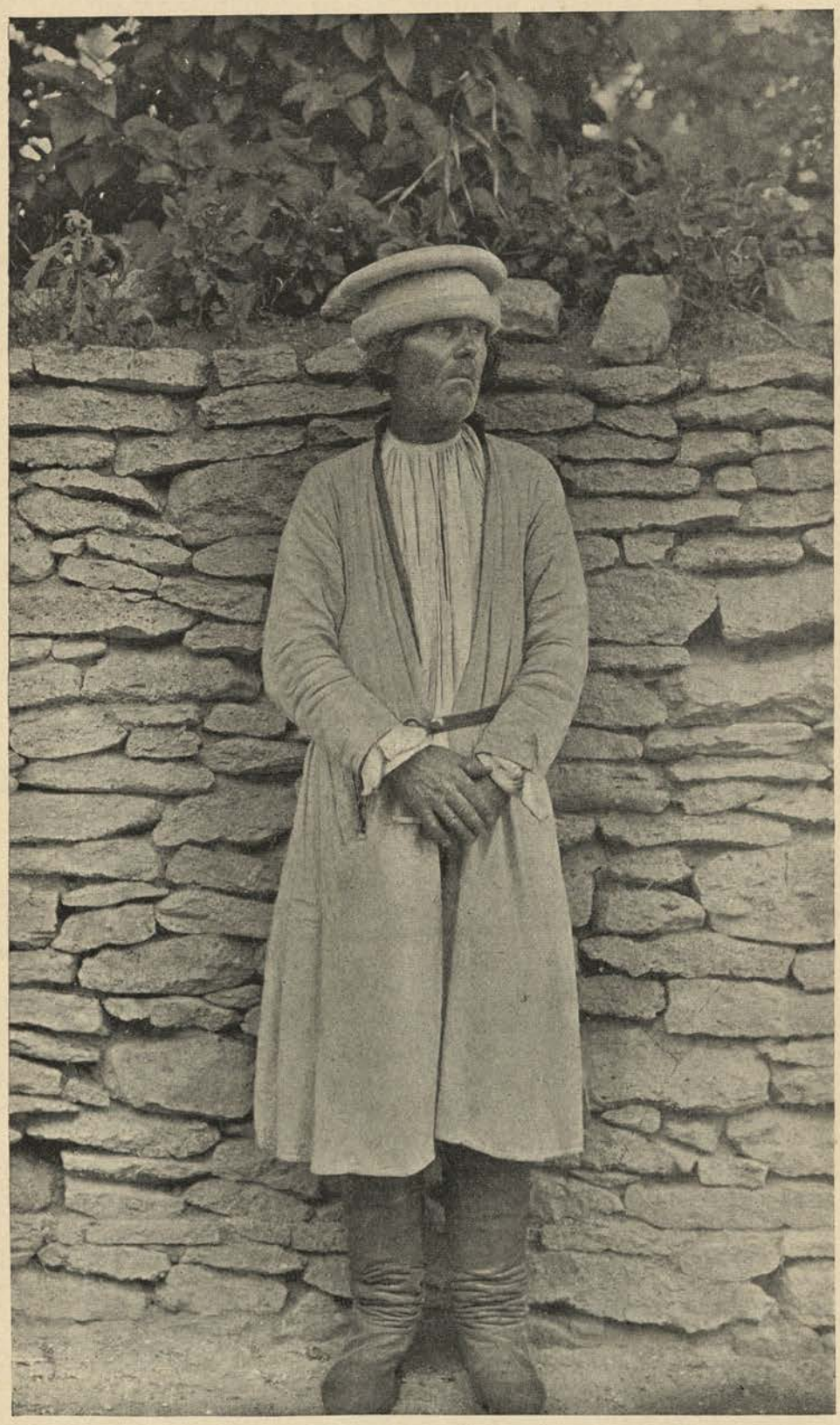
navian) from the north and Little Russian influence from the east. And the whole mass of our people is indissolubly bound up with the mother of their civilisation—Western Europe. There is a complete absence of Byzantine influence in the lands of the Congress Kingdom.

Throughout our country, now but a remnant of the once powerful Polish state, we are, as we have always been, the offspring of Western civilisation. Such was the fate allotted to us. This influence and connection, which we shall uphold with pride, is confirmed alike by the art of our enlightened classes and by the art of our common people, and we intend to maintain it in the future.

(*Translated by* A. B. Boswell)



CUT PAPER DESIGN



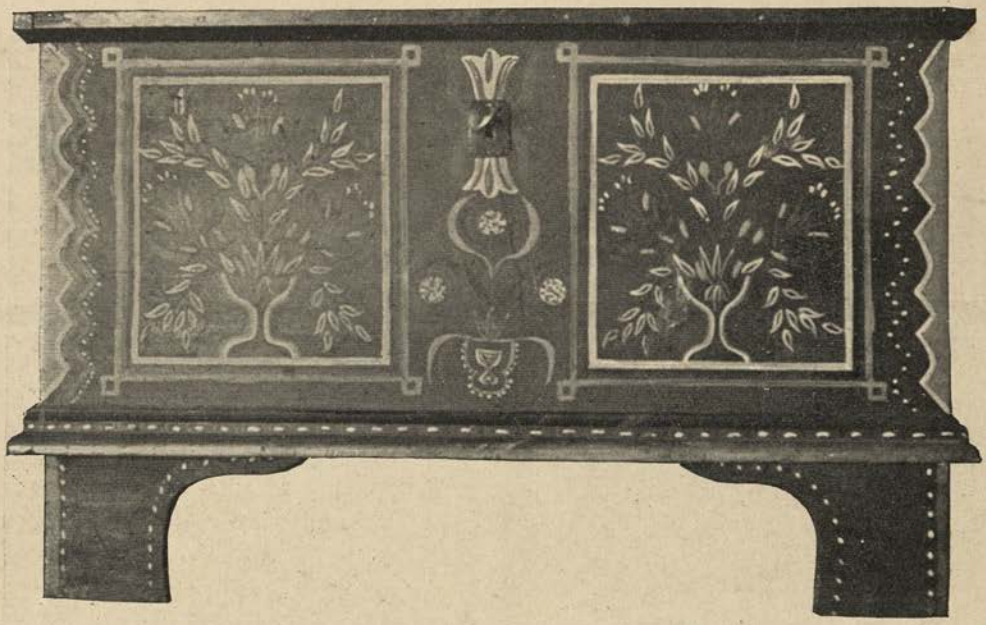
478 PEASANT COSTUME FROM KIELCE

479 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM LOWICZ

480 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM KIELCE

481 GROUP OF PEASANT POTTERY

482 GROUP OF PEASANT POTTERY FROM WARSAW

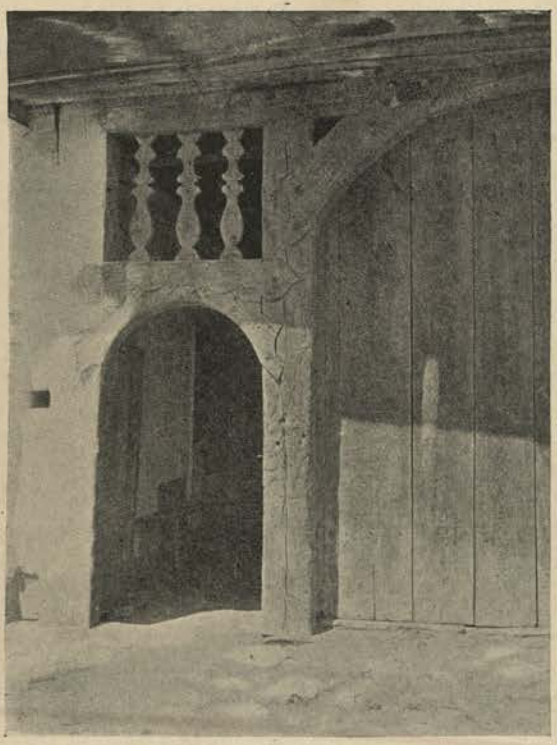


483 PAINTED CHEST FROM LOWICZ

484 TO 486 CARVED CHAIRS FROM KUJAVIA

487 AND 488 PAINTED DRESSERS FROM KUJAVIA

489 MILL AT PIOTRKOW



490 ENTRANCE TO A HOUSE AT WOJKOWICE

491 ENTRANCE TO A HOUSE AT MODRZEJOW

492 PEASANTS' HOUSES IN URŻEDOW

493 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN LOWICZ

494 AND 495 PEASANTS' PAINTED HOUSES

496 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN KUJAVIA

497 CHURCH IN SMARDZEWICE

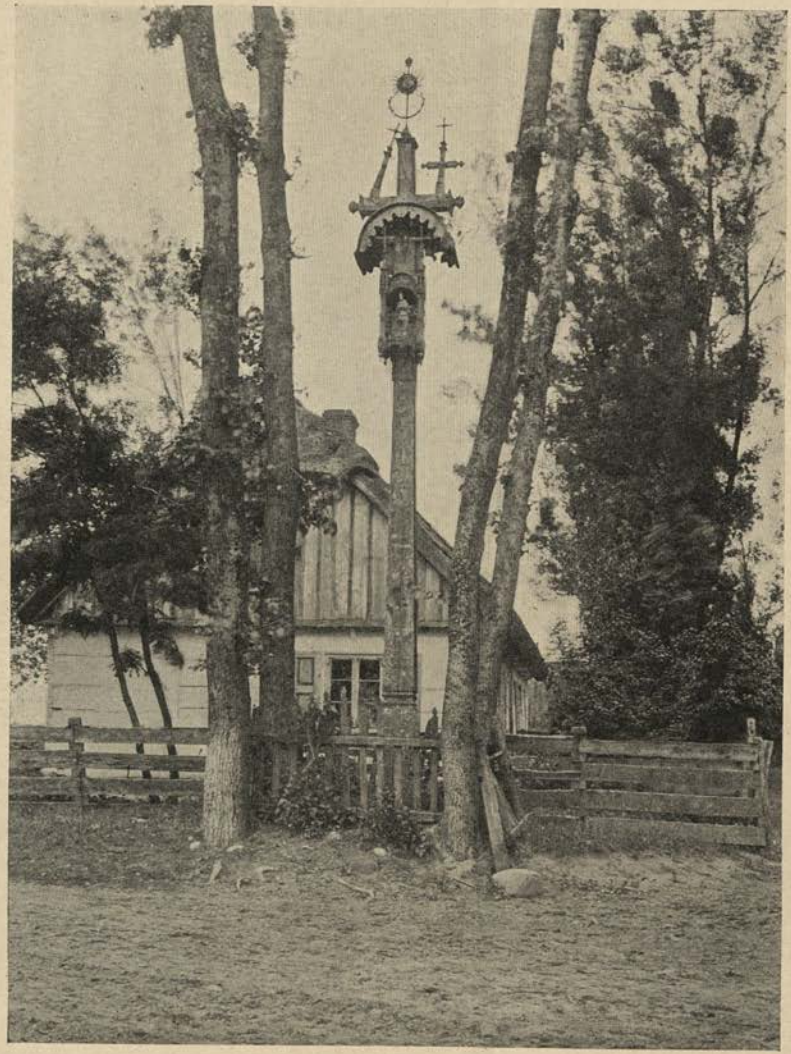
498 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN LOWICZ

499 PEASANT'S HOUSE IN URZĘDOW

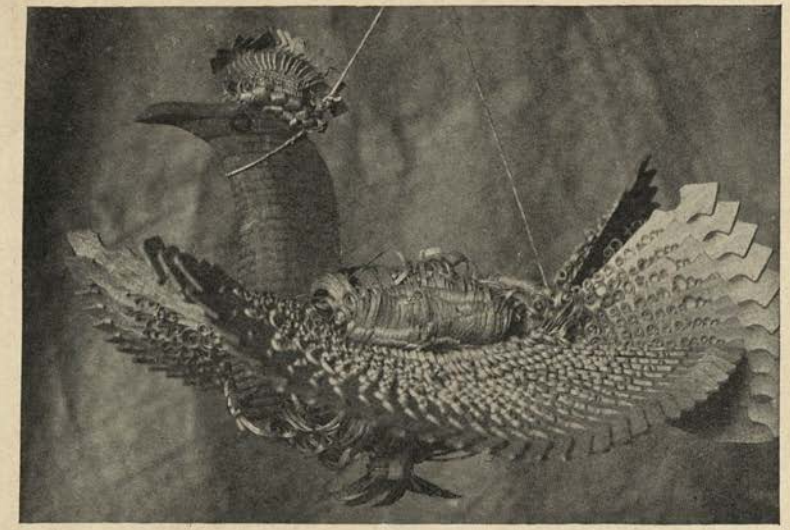
500 INTERIOR OF A PEASANT'S HOUSE AT LOWICZ

501 INTERIOR OF A PEASANT'S HOUSE AT LOWICZ

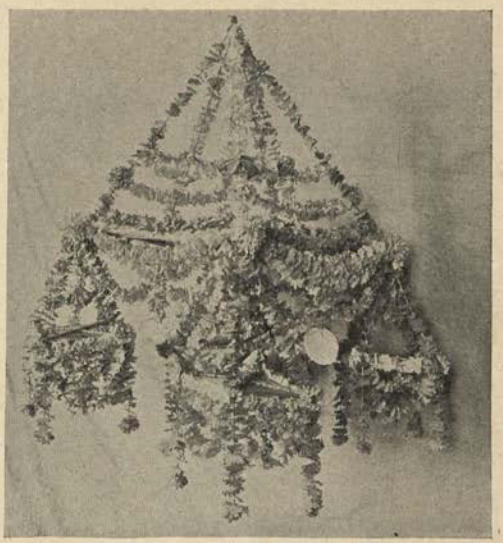
502 WELL AT LOWICZ



503 CROSS AT STRUGIENNICE



504 WOODEN TOY

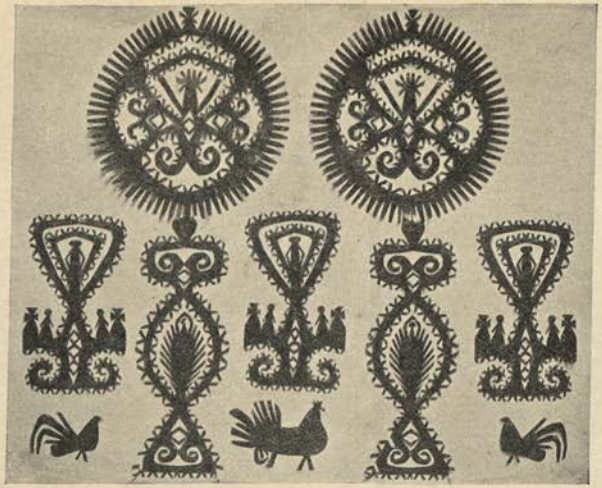


505 "SPIDER" FROM LOWICZ

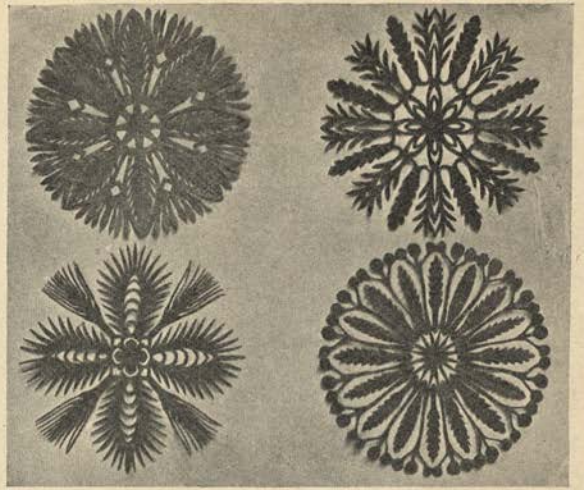
506 BRIDAL CROWNS

507 CROWNS WORN AT "HARVEST HOME"

508 TO 512 CUT PAPER DESIGNS FROM LOWICZ



FROM KURPIE



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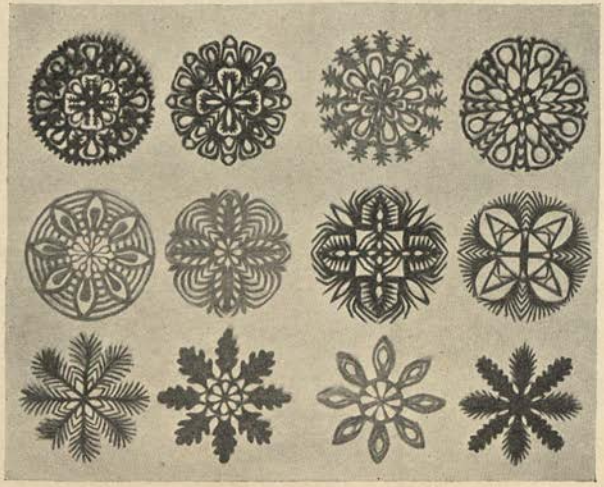

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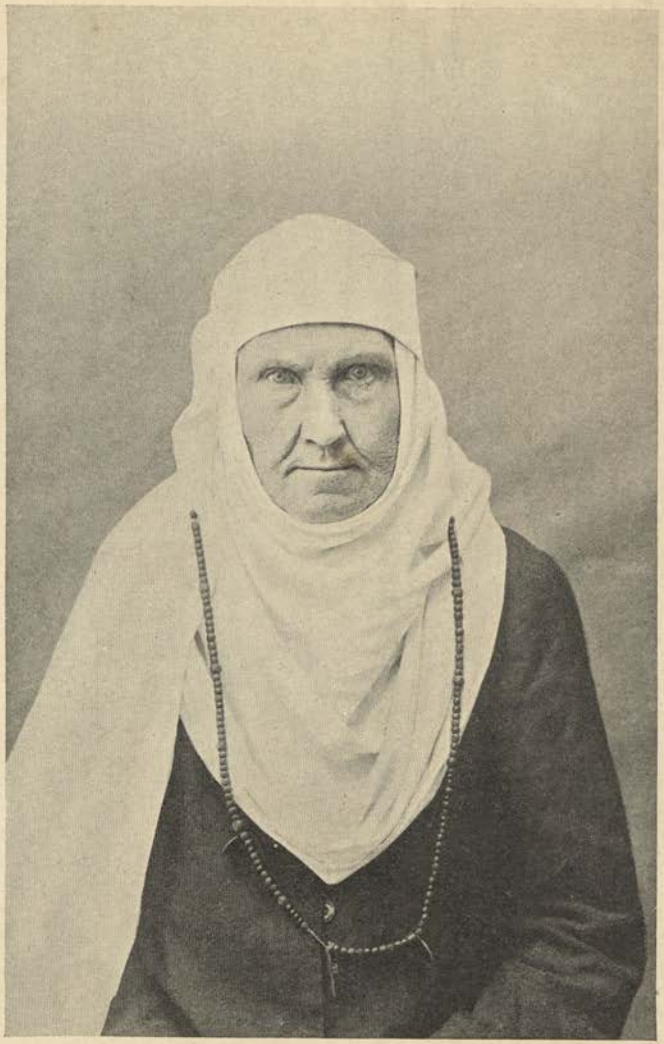
513 TO 516 CUT PAPER DESIGNS

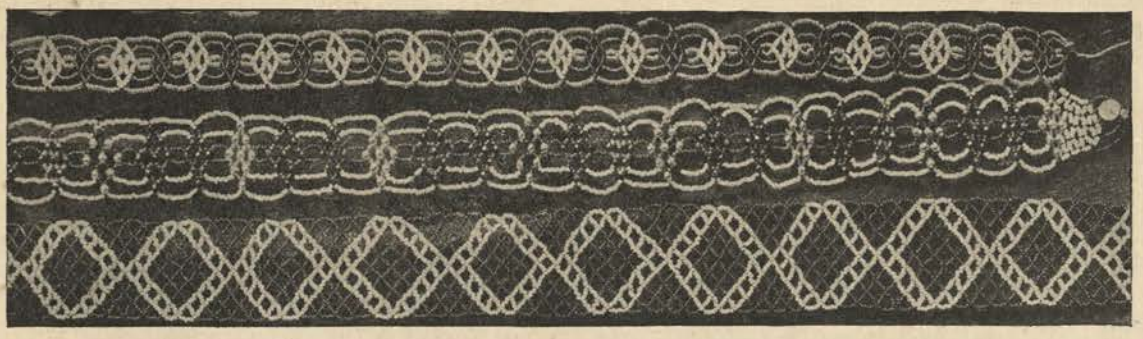
517 CUT PAPER DESIGN

518 PEASANT COSTUME FROM LOWER LITHUANIA

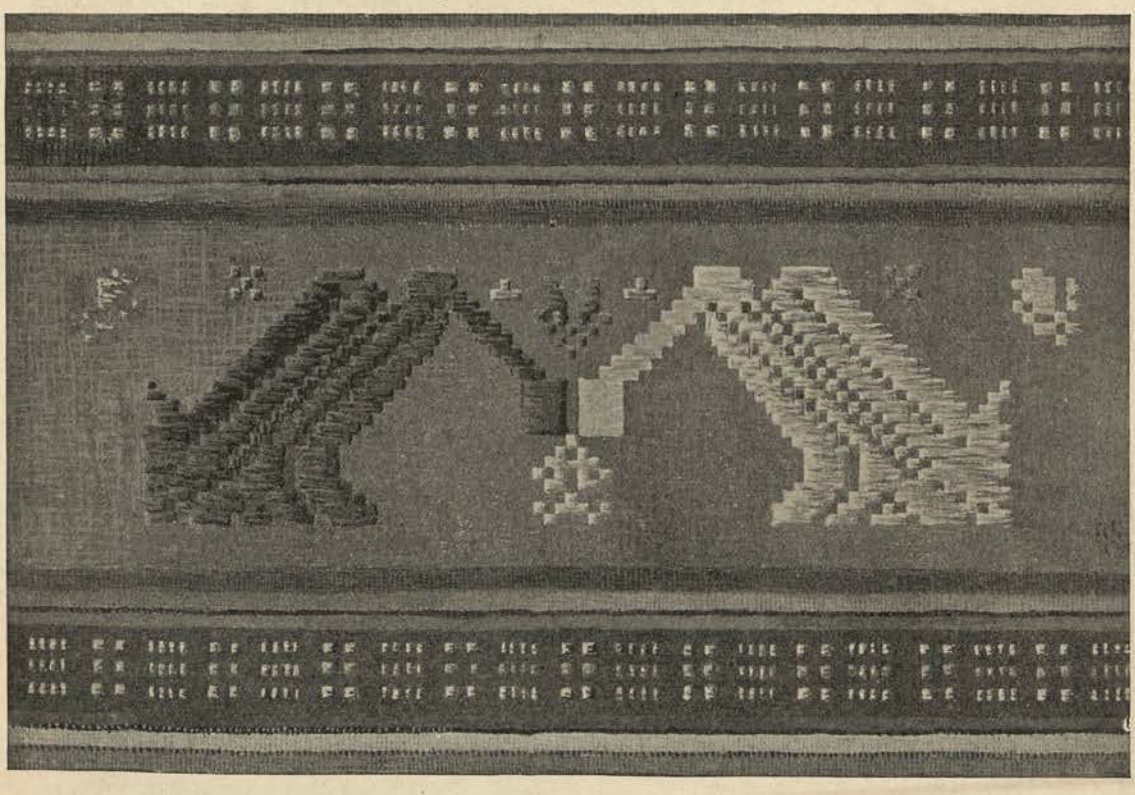


519 LINEN HEAD-DRESS ("NAMITKA") FROM KOVNO

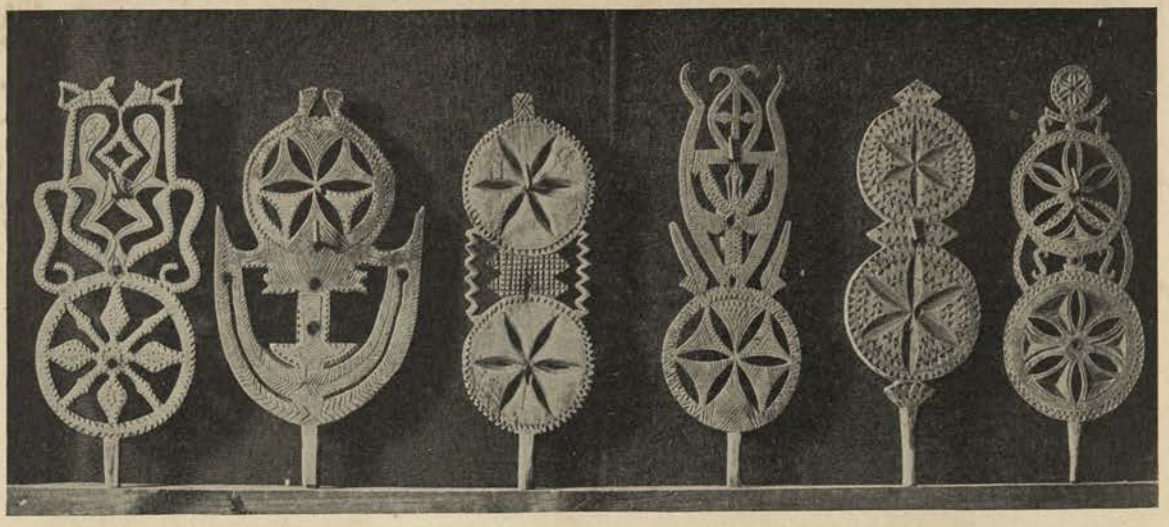
520 TO 522 PEASANT COSTUMES FROM LOWER LITHUANIA



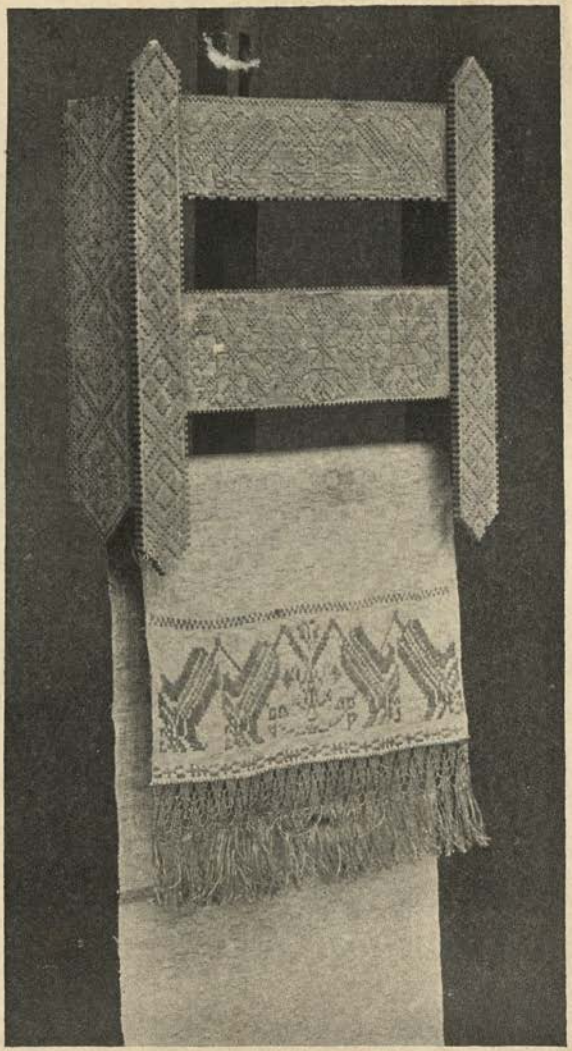
523 BANDS OF CORAL BEADS, FROM SUWALKI



524 AND 525 EXAMPLES OF EMBROIDERY



526 TO 535 CARVED SPINDLES

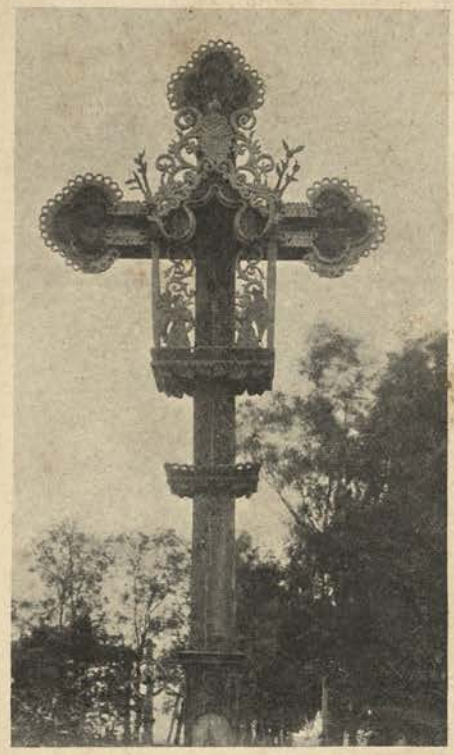


536 CARVED WOODEN TOWEL-RAIL ("ABRUSIENICZE")

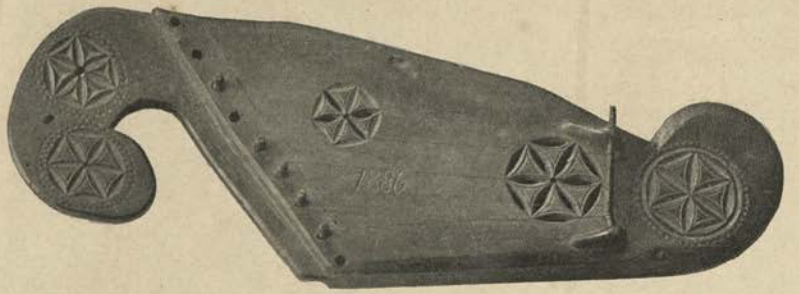
537 CARVED SPINDLE

538 CARVED SPINNING-BOARD AND NEEDLE ("SVEIKELE")

539 TO 541 EXAMPLES OF WOOD-CARVING



542 TO 545 CROSSES FROM KOVNO



546 CARVED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT ("KANLES")

547 AND 548 EARTHENWARE JAR AND JUG

549 AND 550 CARVED WOODEN BOX-LIDS

LITHUANIA

THE PEASANT ART OF LITHUANIA.

By Michael Brensztejn.

THE manifold influences to which Lithuania has been subjected in the course of centuries sufficiently account for the characteristic diversity of the basic elements in its peasant art as a whole. This "Volkskunst" forms a conglomeration of various ethnographic elements which frequently present sharp contrasts. Beginning with an ornament that is reminiscent of Roman bronzes, there are to be found in this peasant art, derived from a common pre-Aryan source, more or less numerous traces of Finnish, Scandinavian, Germanic, Oriental, Byzanto-Russian, West Polish and other influences, some of which are still existent, while others have already vanished. And since these manifold influences have not operated for the same length of time and with the same intensity in all parts of the country, it has resulted that the peasant art of each of these parts has acquired certain particular traits not only in regard to form, but also in respect of technique and material. On the other hand, however, the general character, physical and mental, of the native inhabitants, has impressed a common stamp upon the entire peasant art of the country, and in consequence, in spite of racial affinities with other countries, the artistic productions of Lithuania as a whole have acquired a distinct and independent character, both as regards conception and a certain archaism and primitivism of execution.

The artistic activity of the Lithuanians has in the main manifested itself in three directions—in weaving, in the ornamentation of their household utensils of wood, and in their so-called "chapel crosses" or wayside shrines. Their architecture I will pass over, as it does not present any specially characteristic traits, and as a whole cannot, with the exception of a few carvings on roofs, balconies, and window-frames, mostly adopted in recent times from neighbouring peoples, be regarded as the actual creation of the Lithuanians, in this respect offering a marked contrast to an architecture like that of the Polish inhabitants of the Tatra mountains. (*Cf.* "Peasant Art in Austria and Hungary.")

In ornamental weaving the costumes of the women offered the greatest scope for the activity of the peasant artist. It is, however, very difficult at the present day to reconstruct the costume worn in the earliest times, even with the aid of mediæval records. If one may judge from an apparently very ancient usage, which continued down to the middle of the nineteenth century in the district of Poniewiesh (Government of Kovno), and even now persists among the Letts of Courland, the Lithuanian women wore long wide robes of wool or

linen which enveloped the entire figure, and were fastened at the shoulder by a large round clasp of silvered metal, which was embellished with a relief-like floral ornament. The so-called "namitka" may be regarded as the sole rudimentary survival of this garment. It is still worn by old peasant women in various localities in the Kovno Government, and consists of long narrow strips of white linen which are wound round head and neck, the ends hanging loose on the back or shoulders. The Slavic origin of the word "namitka," and the use of this article of apparel by the peasant women of Volhynia and Podolia until the beginning of the nineteenth century, seem to confirm the legend which attributes the introduction of this headgear into Lithuania to Jagiello, King of Poland and Prince of Lithuania. According to this legend all baptized Lithuanian women received from Jagiello one of these white "namitkas," to distinguish them from those who remained heathens.

Of particular richness and variety of colour was the costume worn in the north of Lithuania—the district of Zmudz. The oldest of the female costumes with which we are familiar at the beginning of the nineteenth century consisted of the "namitka," a laced corset, a skirt, a long dark-blue jacket or coat, and an apron with an embroidered lower edge. At a later date the jacket or coat became shorter, reaching to the knees only, and was pleated at the bottom (Nos. 521 and 522), while for headgear a factory-made cloth took the place of the "namitka." The coat, from the bust downwards more and more closely pleated, became in time to be known in North Lithuania as "šimtakvaldis," *i.e.* "a hundred pleats." The corset, made of patterned wool or silk material and often provided with metal fastenings, was characteristically short in North Lithuania, somewhat reminiscent of the *taille* of the Empire mode, which is still to be met with in Sweden, but not elsewhere in Lithuania. With the exception of the three silk cloths worn wound round the head, which were of factory origin, the whole of the costume was a product of domestic industry—the "hundred pleated" coat, the pleated corset, the striped skirt woven of wool, the linen apron, as well as the openwork collar of glass beads. Equally original was the bridal dress worn at the same period in North Lithuania, which differed from that worn in other parts of Lithuania, and was made wholly of factory-made materials. The so-called "crown" formed a distinctive part of this attire, and was made of coloured silk ribbons manufactured in Prussia. In the district of Poniewiesh (Kovno) the women until quite a short time ago wore broad bands made of gold thread ("kaspinėnkai") with lace edging and silk lining, which like-

wise were of German origin. These bands or galloons were wound round the head and fastened at the back. The only relic of the early costume that remains in North Lithuania is the partiality for crude colours both in the home-woven woollen stuffs and in the fabrics bought from traders. In place of the striped coats that used to be worn, and which closely resembled the work of peasants in the neighbourhood of Lowicz in Poland, Scotch checks have now come into use, while the corset and the pleated jacket have gone out altogether. Nor are these few survivals any longer met with in other parts of Lithuania.

Only in recent days, when the national renaissance has been proceeding with rapid strides, have the Lithuanian women begun to wear a national costume on the occasion of important festivals—a costume borrowed from the province of Suwalki. Owing to the close relations which have subsisted for centuries between the Lithuanian inhabitants of this district and the Polish Mazurs, this costume strongly resembles that worn in the neighbourhood of Cracow.

The costume of the men has fared even worse than that of the women, and it fell into disuse before this. From analogy with the costume worn by the Lettish men in Courland and according to information given by aged inhabitants, it consisted of a long home-woven woollen coat of a dark-blue or grey colour, resembling in cut and fold the above described jacket of the women. At the present time the men wear short coats of grey home-woven cloth, having the cut of a town-made coat. Here and there in North Lithuania the fur cap, at one time generally worn by the men, is still retained under the name of "triausé," *i.e.* three-eared—a form which points to its having been adopted from the people of a country with a very severe climate, probably from the Finns, whom the Lithuanians once had for near neighbours, and a branch of whom now settled in Lappland still wear a similar cap. The wooden shoes ("klumpie"), still frequently met with in North Lithuania and often bearing carved or painted ornamentation, are akin to those now in use in Sweden. Besides these, shoes made of plaited leather are in general use.

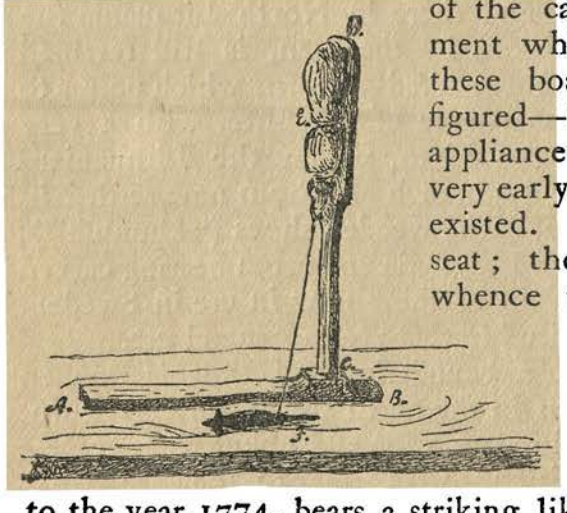
On the southern and eastern boundaries of Lithuania woollen girdles of a kind quite unknown in the north are extensively worn. They are from two to ten centimetres wide and about three metres long, and are ornamented at both ends with fringes; they are hand-woven and the patterns are very varied, some showing a close resemblance to the girdles worn in the adjacent parts of White Russia, while others are similar to those found among the Laplanders.

While in the northern districts of Lithuania the home-woven

stuffs have only stripes or checks by way of ornament, in the south, *i.e.* in the Government of Suwalki, ornamental motives derived from the plant world are principally made use of, along with geometrical patterns, as in the aprons and table-cloths; and here the tulip motive ("Tulpinis raštas"), wholly unknown in the north and extremely rare in Central Lithuania, is very much in evidence. Curiously enough the only other place where this motive is met with is Bosnia, and there it is treated differently (*cf.* "Peasant Art in Austria and Hungary," illustration No. 554), while its use is unknown amongst Lithuania's neighbours.

The practice of using carved ornamentation for domestic utensils is very general in the northern districts of Lithuania. A wealth of such ornamental devices is displayed in the boards to which the spindles are attached at the spinning-wheel. This implement is derived from Sweden, where it is in common use and known as "rockblad"; thence has come its form, size and, to a large extent, its ornament (*cf.* "Peasant Art in Sweden," Illus. Nos. 148–166; also "Fataburen," 1909 No. 1, Figs. 14–17).

Very original, and unknown elsewhere in Europe, is the long wooden needle called "šveikele," used for fastening the wool or flax to the board of the spinning-wheel (No. 538). It is cut out of a single piece of wood, although it often has a few links at the end. One cannot help marvelling at the patience bestowed on the making of these implements; sometimes a lad will spend several days in making a single needle for presentation to his sweetheart with one of the carved boards. Another implement which served the same purpose as these boards was that which is here figured—the so-called "Prząśnica," an appliance which doubtless originated in very early times before the spinning-wheel existed. The board AB is used as a seat; the flax E is attached at CD, whence the fibres are wound on the spindle F. The board CD usually has carved ornamentation on it, and one example which hails from the government of Kovno, and belongs to the year 1774, bears a striking likeness in motive and technique to similar implements from the district of Lida in the Vilna Government, where the Lithuanians have mingled with the White Russians and borrowed their ornamentation.



Similar decoration is found on the "kultuves," a kind of stick or beetle used in laundry operations, as well as on the "abrusienicze," or towel-rails (No. 536), and other articles. These objects are often painted in divers colours.

From their long and intimate relations with the Finns, the Lithuanians derived a stringed instrument, now coming into use again after being long discarded—an old Finnish instrument somewhat akin to the zither, and called in Lithuanian "kanles" (No. 546), a variation of "kantele," the name by which the instrument is mentioned in the Kalevala.

The favourite colours of the people of North Lithuania, to iudge by their preferences in both home-woven and purchased stuffs and the pigments used for their household implements, are red, green, and yellow; in the south, besides these, blue and violet are in vogue, But red is dominant everywhere. A North Lithuanian proverb says, "What is red is beautiful,"* and up till the middle of the nineteenth century an entirely red costume was worn there, of which the writer possesses an example. In combining the crude colours regard is always paid to the rules governing the complementary colours; the vegetable dyes in use are prepared at home, and the harmonies of tone achieved with them have resulted naturally from long usage.

In recent times there has been an active revival of weaving as a domestic industry, especially in the north, thanks to the support given to the movement by the landed proprietors.

It remains for us to mention what are, perhaps, the worthiest products of the artistic activity of the Lithuanians—namely, the carved crosses and "chapels" which they are wont to set up outside their homes, by the roadside, on the summits of hills, on the graves of the dead, and in other places as memorials of their gratitude to God or as marks of their sorrow. The country used to be full of them, and they gave it a quite specific character, so that at one time the line of demarcation of the cross-strewn territory practically coincided with the ethnographic boundary of Lithuania. Nowhere else in Europe, with the exception of a part of Hungary, are such richly ornamented crosses erected. It is hardly possible to group them into definite types. In every diocese, and even in every village, the crosses show differences of proportions, form, ornament, colour, and iconography. In regard to form, as well as ornament, individual freedom has had full play. The ornamental motives are very varied, and the plant-world has been largely drawn upon. All styles are

* It is the same with the Russians. In Russian *krasny* means both red and beautiful. *Trans.*

represented among them, derived probably from the churches in the vicinity. Particularly noteworthy are the iron ornaments which usually crown the roofs or canopies of such "chapel crosses." Simple as they are, and mostly made by illiterate village smiths, they often possess a certain nobility of line and display a wealth of fantasy. The carved wooden figures of saints which form part of these memorials naturally follow as closely as possible the recognised iconography of the Church, and differ from similar productions in other countries only in their primitive technique. This branch of Lithuanian peasant art received its death-blow about half a century ago, when an interdict was issued (1864) against the erection of such crosses in other places than cemeteries, and the revocation of the interdict in 1896 has had very little effect in reviving it. The number of "chapel-crosses" is diminishing year by year, and their place is being taken more and more by smooth commonplace wooden crosses which are destitute of decorative features.

We come at length to the following final result of our investigation. The older peasant art of Lithuania, and particularly that of its northern parts, is predominantly akin to the Finnish, and to some extent to the Scandinavian; while, in its later forms, it shows more affinity to Slav types. The neighbourly relations which subsisted for so many years between the Lithuanians and the Finns have given to them a common stock of folk-songs and a whole series of similar phrases. Which of the two races has borrowed from the other, and how much, cannot at present be determined, for the history of their association has so far been very little investigated, and such linguistic studies as bear upon the question have not got beyond the preliminary stage. Light on this problem will only come when the nomenclature of the various ornamental motives and domestic appliances in Lithuanian and Finnish has been subjected to thorough analysis.

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